A Celebration of Families

Join hands and celebrate in song
For families make this province strong.
Take time together, time to share,
Show each other that you care.

Families are the place to learn:
Kindness, caring and concern.
Teach us well and make us strong,
To the future we belong.

Families give this land its heart,
Here is where we get our start,
Be as you would have us be,
Light the world for all to see.

Produced for The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference - Celebrating Alberta's Families, February 1990.

The logo symbolizes the strength and unity that come through love and commitment to families. The dynamic nature of family in the changing environment is seen in the vibrant patterns and shapes of the kaleidoscope. The [illegible] reflects the uniqueness of family members connected through caring; the heart holds a part of each to create the whole. The four corners are metaphors for the different forms of support needed by all families to grow and thrive.

CELEBRATING
ALBERTA'S
FAMILIES

Conference Report

The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference

Celebrating Alberta's Families

May 15, 1990

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

91-00331/

Message
from The Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta

Strong, dynamic families are fundamentally important to a strong, dynamic province. Alberta was built by resourceful individuals, with a tradition of hard work, enterprise and a deep concern for human values. As the 21st century approaches, these qualities which are nurtured in strong families are essential to meeting the challenges of the future.

It is in recognition of the importance of families to the future of this province that I proposed this conference which provided the forum for developing the Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families. This conference was an important beginning to the process of obtaining a broad range of opinions and input from across the province. It is indeed remarkable that the diversity of participants attending the conference was able to develop a consensus on the important issues for families today and for the future.

Conference participants, from all walks of life, brought the breadth and depth of their experience and were a powerful force in determining the direction and outcome for the conference. The result is this report which summarizes conference results and outlines the focus for the future.

I am very pleased to have spearheaded this important event. I anticipate your continued investment and involvement in continuing what was started here. Together we can create a future where families can thrive.

W Helen Hunley

The Honourable W. Helen Hunley
Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta

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Executive Summary

The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference - Celebrating Alberta's Families and the *Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families* were announced in The Speech from the Throne in February 1989, as part of a series of initiatives for families. The conference, together with the Premier's Council, established the mechanism to start the dialogue with and among Albertans about effective solutions to the complex issues facing Alberta families today and into the future.

It was thus that about 500 Albertans came together on February 19 - 21, in Edmonton, bringing varied perspectives to the discussions regarding Alberta families, and to identify a series of key issues needing further dialogue and exploration. They were a diverse group of Albertans, representing the business community, churches, city and town councils, improvement districts, a wide array of professional and advocacy groups, Indians, Metis, youth, immigrants, women's groups, agencies, educational institutions, all levels of government and the general public.

The conference was held under the patronage of The Honourable W. Helen Hunley and planned under her guidance, to develop an Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families to be discussed more fully with Albertans. The conference also was designed to increase awareness and understanding of the family and its functions in the 1990's; identify significant challenges that families face within the context of a changing Alberta society; provide an opportunity for debate and dialogue and to celebrate, enhance and support the family.

Families in Alberta are diverse and are changing in some significant ways. There is also remarkable

> ***"In proposing this conference, it was my explicit wish that the delegates attending represent a broad range of interests. This is necessary because the issues facing families are diverse and require a range of perspectives in proposing effective approaches and solutions.***
>
> ***No one has all the answers. Promoting strong families, helping them stay together and cope with challenges and stress are shared responsibilities - a partnership of individuals, families, communities, and governments in Alberta.***
>
> ***And, it is in the spirit of that partnership that I believe we must work cooperatively to continue to build on our strengths."***
>
> ***- The Honourable W. Helen Hunley***
>
> ***Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta***

continuity. Conference participants were provided an opportunity to explore both the diversity and continuity, in order to increase their awareness and understanding of the family and its function in the 1990's through study papers distributed prior to the conference, by attending plenary sessions and workshops and through debate and dialogue with other delegates in nine major topic areas:

A. *Balancing Work and Family Life,*
B. *Families and the Community,*
C. *Supporting and Strengthening Families,*
D. *Learning for Living - Strategies for Promoting Family Development,*
E. *Financial Health and Families,*
F. *Health and Families,*
G. *Families and the Education System,*
H. *Families and Leisure, and*
I. *Families and the Law.*

Delegates then met to discuss and debate their selected topic area in study groups, and identified a total of 77 issues of priority which, in their view, needed further dialogue and exploration by all Albertans. With further consolidation as a result of overlap among issues in the same study area, 48 priority issues were identified.

In assessing all of the issues, eight themes emerged that cut across all study groups. These themes form the basis for the Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families to discuss with Albertans. The Agenda also provides a focus for individual Albertans, community groups and interested parties to examine, within the context of their own mission and objectives.

The Agenda for Action that the Premier's Council will now probe and examine in more detail with

"In fact if any single word could be used to characterize families in Canada today, that word would be DIVERSITY.

...But there is also remarkable continuity. Families continue to be valued by us as individuals and by society for many of the same reasons they always have. Families are places for caring, for sharing across generations, for having babies, and for intimacy."

-Susan A. McDaniel, Sociologist, U. of A.

Albertans throughout the province is highlighted as follows:

1. ***How can we best foster cultural values that match the current and future social environment so that families can thrive?***

2. ***How best do we address the desire to give attention to more preventive services for families without jeopardizing the necessary rehabilitative and treatment services?***

3. ***What mechanisms and workplace supports must we put in place to make it easier for Albertans and Alberta families to have a balance of work, leisure and family responsibilities?***

4. ***How best can we create a social consensus which will assist communities, service agencies, and all levels of government to work cooperatively towards a common goal of supporting families?***

5. ***How should the systems which impact families respond to address changing realities and ensure that policies support and strengthen families?***

6. ***How can we invest energy and resources in the empowerment of communities in their essential role in supporting families?***

7. ***To what extent can we create an environment where Albertans are open to change and growth, and seek out opportunities for lifelong learning so that they can function effectively in a changing environment?***

8. ***How best can we ensure that families have the skills and financial health they need, in order to be strong and successful?***

"This conference was planned, not as an end in itself, but as a beginning. A beginning that involves all Albertans. It is the beginning of a renewal that will strengthen our families and our future.

...It is a transition that demands that we reflect on the very meaning and role of families in our lives today. And it demands that we develop a new partnership - a new partnership based on unity, based on trust and commitment and working together in harmony."

-John Oldring, Minister,

Alberta Family and Social Services

Clearly, these issues will not be solved with quick fix, band-aid approaches. Potential solutions in one area must be examined to make sure they do not create unintended negative consequences on families in other areas. The major systems which affect families are interrelated and interdependent. The health system, the education system, workplaces and the economic system, the social services system and the recreational system provide services to families. It is the interdependency of all of these systems that make the process of change complex.

"If we want to turn society around in support of families, we each have to start

...with our own family, -

In our own home, -

With our own friends, -

In our own communities, -

And with the help of the supporting agencies that are already in place..."

-Jean Forest,
Conference
Co-chairperson

The issues do not lend themselves to technical solutions. Ethical, value-based decision-making is required to choose from among several viable options, those which will yield the most effective solutions. We need the collective wisdom of individuals, families, communities, businesses, professionals and governments.

We have embarked upon an exciting journey. It is appropriate, as we approach the turn of the century, to use a decision-making strategy that involves participation of citizens. Everyone has a stake in resolving the issues of our society that are disruptive to families and to effective family functioning.

Although this approach takes longer at the beginning, the opportunity for all Albertans to provide their input enables support for and investment in successful, long-lasting solutions.

As we look at ways to make change and improvements, we must acknowledge those things which are already working well. There are many families in Alberta that are strong, successful families. There are solutions and programs already in existence which are highly effective. We need to nurture these initiatives and learn from them. We must celebrate the successful efforts which have contributed to making the province a better, more prosperous place for families. We must build on these past successes as we search for solutions to the challenges ahead.

"Came to the conference feeling angry and somewhat negative - am leaving conference with a great deal of hope for the future for families and communities. Let's all work together as a whole family and make it all come about better."

-Conference participant.

If you would like to write to the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, to comment on this report or provide ideas and comments about Alberta families, please send them to:

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1. Introduction

"In proposing this conference, it was my explicit wish that the delegates attending represent a broad range of interests. This is necessary because the issues facing families are diverse and require a range of perspectives in proposing effective approaches and solutions.

No one has all the answers. Promoting strong families, helping them stay together and cope with challenges and stress are shared responsibilities - a partnership of individuals, families, communities, and governments in Alberta.

And, it is in the spirit of that partnership that I believe we must work cooperatively to continue to build on our strengths."

With these words from The Honourable W. Helen Hunley, Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, began a unique conference, held in Edmonton on February 19, 20 & 21, 1990.

The conference itself began a process of discussions with Albertans throughout the province, to explore strategies for strengthening all families.

Delegates from across the province who attended the conference identified a series of priority issues that are critical to ensuring a nourishing and supportive environment for Alberta families. These priority issues will now be the basis for further discussion and debate throughout the province as Albertans together search for effective solutions to the issues facing Alberta families today and into the future.

"Alberta is founded on our families.

...I believe in Alberta's families. I believe that their strength and vitality is a measure of our ability to succeed in the future.

And I believe that together we can effectively help our families meet any challenge in the future"

-The Honourable W. Helen Hunley

"The lifestyles, values and expectations of Albertans have changed as well, reflecting world-wide changes in how people live. The traditional picture of Alberta in many ways no longer applies. We too are faced with contradictions between the traditional picture and the reality of how people live. The family continues to be the basic unit of our society - it forms our foundation and provides our stability. However, the traditional view of the two-parent, two-child family - where the father is the sole wage earner, while the mother runs the household - is no longer accurate."

- "Caring and Responsibility - A Statement of Social Policy for Alberta."

This document is a record of the conference. It is also a discussion document for Albertans - at - large. It describes the Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, whose mandate is to probe the issues further with people throughout the province. The Agenda also provides a focus for individual Albertans, community groups and interested parties to examine, within the context of their own mission and objectives, and together to find ways to strengthen and support families.

The document describes the most critical issues facing Alberta families today, as seen by conference attendees. It is these issues which provide the basis for the Agenda. This document, together with the ten study papers developed as background information for conference delegates, will assist Albertans in formulating their thoughts and opinions about long range directions.

In developing long range directions, Albertans must reflect on several issues. Both the current status, and the historical situation for families need to be examined as objectively as possible. This must be done in the context of the strengths and limitations of our social and economic environment.

What is our vision of the future? What role do we see for families? How best can we create a social consensus and shift our economic environment to a world where families find it easy to be strong and successful? These are key questions to be answered through the discussions with the Premier's Council.

The most effective solutions will be those that recognize and embody the underlying changes in our society. Our current world is a world of change. Families are more diverse. We are subject to global forces that are changing the basis of our social relationships. We are gaining new understanding of relationships and patterns in our physical universe. Our evolution from an industrial age to an information age is requiring us to shift our perspectives and challenge former beliefs.

Clearly, the issues will not be solved with quick fix, band-aid approaches. Potential solutions in one area must be examined to make sure they do not create unintended negative consequences on families in other areas.

We are beginning to understand that the major systems which affect families are interrelated and interdependent. The health system, the education system, the economic system, the social services system and the recreational system provide services to families. These systems depend on the family and on each other to provide necessary resources for their own success.

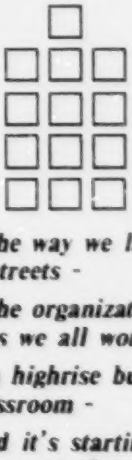
The health system depends on families and communities for care of dependents, some of whom would otherwise be institutionalized. Our physical health is affected by our emotional and spiritual health, which is found in our family support.

Families obtain financial resources as a result of participation in the labour force. The economic viability of our province depends on a productive business sector. To be productive, workplaces depend on healthy, skilled, knowledgeable employees.

It is the interdependency of all of these systems that makes the process of change complex.

We have embarked upon an exciting journey. It is appropriate, as we approach the turn of the century, to use a decision-making strategy that involves participation of citizens. Everyone has a stake in resolving the issues of our society that are disruptive

This, I suggest, is the icon, the fundamental image of the industrial world -



it's the way we lay out our streets -

it's the organization charts we all work in -

it's a highrise building, a classroom -

... and it's starting to dawn on us that this way of organizing ourselves has no future."

-Ruben Nelson, Futurist and Strategist

to families and to effective family functioning. The issues do not lend themselves to technical solutions. Ethical, value-based decision-making is required, to choose from among several viable options, those which will yield the most effective solutions.

Although this approach takes longer at the beginning, the opportunity for all Albertans to provide their input enables support for and investment in successful, long-lasting solutions. Individuals, families, communities, businesses, professionals, and governments in Alberta must all contribute their thoughts and their wisdom to developing solutions.

"A myth is something that has never happened, but we believe is happening all the time. Joseph Campbell has described how we break myths - 'We will not change our great organizing myths until our pain becomes too great and then we will collectively allow the formation of new and useful myths ... If enough of us change collectively then we take on the energy of that collective change and the myth breaks apart.'"

-Joyce Irvine, Social Worker and Family Therapist

We will need this collective wisdom to create a world where every family is dedicated to promoting the welfare and happiness of each of its members, to showing appreciation for each other frequently and spending sufficient quality time together. We need to support families in developing a sense of a greater good, in order to provide family members with strength and purpose. We need to create a world where families are able to view stress or crisis as an opportunity to grow (Stinnett and DeFrain - characteristics of strong families).

As we embark on the journey, we must keep in mind the broader societal perspectives that either hinder or support family functioning. As Ruben Nelson said in his address to the conference, ***"Your job is not problem solving. Families are not a problem to be solved - they're both a fact of life, and at times a curse - but families are mostly a wondrous blessing, and our job is to find the conditions within which that can be true."***

As we look at ways to make change and improvements, we must acknowledge those things which are already working well. There are many families in Alberta that are strong, successful families. There are solutions and programs already in existence which are highly effective. We need to nurture and learn from these initiatives. We must celebrate the successful efforts which have contributed to making the province a better, more prosperous place for families. We must build on these past successes as we search for solutions to the challenges ahead.

> ***"The family in all its varied forms, is the heart and soul of this province. The viability of the family is the viability of this province...and the future of the family is the future of the province.***
>
> ***You therefore have an important mission here and I wish you well."***
>
> ***-The Honourable***
> ***W. Helen Hunley***

2. The Conference

"Families are the cornerstone of our society where we learn our values, nurture our sense of health and develop the skills with which we live our lives.

Nothing we do as a government can be more important than nourishing and supporting Alberta's families in all their diverse forms."

-Honourable Don R. Getty, Premier of Alberta

The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference - Celebrating Alberta's Families was announced in The Speech from the Throne (February 1989) as one of a series of initiatives for families; these included the establishment of:

- Family Day,
- The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families,
- The Alberta Family Life and Drug Abuse Foundation, and
- The Community Facility Enhancement Program.

In addition, The Speech from the Throne announced the enhancement of existing programs to support families, including in-home support services for families which are at serious risk; family shelters to combat family violence; treatment services for families and children suffering from emotional and mental health problems; the Alberta Maintenance Enforcement Program; and Day Care. The government outlined its commitment to assuring that families remain strong and that those in crisis receive the support of a caring society.

These initiatives are undertaken within the context of **Caring and Responsibility - A Statement of Social Policy for Alberta**, which outlines the leadership role for government in relation to social policies as follows:

> **"The Government of Alberta recognizes that social and economic development are inseparable. It is committed to building on our tradition of caring for each other and ensuring a quality of life in which all Albertans can participate democratically and share fully on equal terms in the rich cultural, economic, and social diversity of their province and in its**

> **future development.**
>
> **The government will provide the necessary leadership and overall responsibility for provincial social policies and will provide support and resources to create an environment in which Albertans can work together, be self-reliant, and take responsibility for their own lives, their families and their communities.**
>
> **Government policies and programs will be designed to promote cooperative and independent initiatives of individual Albertans while at the same time ensuring that those who, for a variety of reasons, must depend on social programs for support are able to live dignified and meaningful lives."**

Within this context, the conference was held under the patronage of The Honourable W. Helen Hunley, Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, and was planned under her guidance to address the following objectives:

- to build awareness and understanding of the family and its functions in the 1990's;
- to identify significant challenges that face families within the context of a changing Alberta society;
- to provide an opportunity for debate and dialogue on family matters;
- to provide an opportunity to celebrate, enhance and support the family; and
- to develop an Agenda for Action, through identification of a series of key issues needing further dialogue and exploration, for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families to discuss more broadly with Albertans.

The conference was kicked off with a Family Fair for the general public, which was planned in celebration of Family Day and designed to provide information about services available to families. The Family Fair attracted about 25,000 people, and served to heighten awareness and provide an opportunity to celebrate,

"We, as Albertans, have always been resourceful and confident in our strength, and proud of our heritage.

Alberta's families have always been renowned for their spirit and courage. It is these qualities that will allow us to move into the next decade with confidence."

-The Honourable W. Helen Hunley

enhance and support families.

About 500 Albertans came together on February 19 - 21, in Edmonton, bringing varied perspectives to the discussions regarding Alberta families, and to develop the agenda for the Premier's Council. They were a diverse group of Albertans, nominated by their organizations as a result of their demonstrated interest in and commitment to families.

Delegates represented the business community, churches, city and town councils, improvement districts, a wide array of professional and advocacy groups, Indians, Métis, youth, immigrants, women's groups, agencies, educational institutions, all levels of government and the general public.

Prior to the conference, delegates received two background papers - one describing the changing family and the other related to the study group of their choice.

Conference participants were provided an opportunity to increase their awareness and understanding of the family and its function in the 1990's through the study papers, by attending plenary sessions and workshops and through debate and dialogue with other delegates. Thirty-six speakers and panelists presented information in plenary sessions and in workshops.

Delegates could select two of the 20 workshops available. The workshops were on a wide diversity of topics related to the study groups. Delegates listened to presentations by experts from across Alberta and Canada, to obtain information related to their selected study group.

The workshop sessions and study papers provided much food for thought. This information will also be

"Not only did I get to voice my opinions, I learned ... and felt our proposals were valid and useful."

-Conference participant

"Needed more time for workshops; more chances to attend different workshops."

-Conference participant

"Too bad we couldn't take them all (workshops), or at least more of them."

-Conference participant

useful to Albertans in formulating their thoughts and opinions about long range directions.

Study groups provided delegates with an opportunity to join with others in an examination of their selected topic areas. The study groups were:

A. *Balancing Work and Family Life,*
B. *Families and the Community,*
C. *Supporting and Strengthening Families,*
D. *Learning for Living - Strategies for Promoting Family Development,*
E. *Financial Health and Families,*
F. *Health and Families,*
G. *Families and the Education System,*
H. *Families and Leisure, and*
I. *Families and the Law.*

The purpose of the study groups was to identify the priority issues for Alberta families in each of these nine areas. The priority issues would then form the basis of the Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families.

It is important to recognize the strengths and limitations of such a process. Conference attendees were asked to identify key issues in a fairly short period of time. The broad diversity, however, brought the richness of many perspectives, and thus a comfort that the issues identified were relevant for a broad cross-section of Albertans.

The time allocated to analyze issues at the conference was of necessity short, which meant that the issues did not have the benefit of a thorough assessment. This conference, however, was intended to provide a starting place, a jump-off-point for wider discussions. The discussions with Albertans

"I appreciated the way our study group participants listened to each other's points of view and worked hard to represent a variety of wide ranging concerns and solutions for them."

-Conference participant

"Because of the divergence of personal views and special interests it became impossible within the time frame to discuss all of them."

-Conference participant

throughout the province which follow the conference will allow further examination of the issues as well as debate on options and strategies for their resolution.

What was accomplished

A description of the outcomes of the study groups is outlined in the remainder of this report. About 90% of those participants who answered the evaluation questionnaire (about half the delegates) rated it as satisfactory to excellent.

Although several delegates admitted that they initially reacted to the imposed discussion process, most went on to say that they had their most beneficial experience in the study groups. Almost all expressed the hope that the results of these discussions would be used, and that the exercise would not prove to be a futile one.

Several participants said they would take action in their own communities and would discuss their experiences and the findings of the conference with their own organizations. The further exploration of issues and themes, within the context of the mission and objectives of these groups will begin to spread the discussion throughout Alberta. This supports the objectives of the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, as well as the conference objective that responsibility for action will not be undertaken solely by government.

"I hope we may pull the groups in our community together to discuss the benefits of family support in every aspect."

-Conference participant

"Very good exercise! Not in futility I hope!"

-Conference participant

"Came to conference feeling angry and somewhat negative - am leaving conference with a great deal of hope for the future for families and communities. Let's all work together as a whole family and make it all come about better."

-Conference participant

3. Families in Alberta

Families in Alberta are changing in some significant ways. These changes were addressed in the ten study papers provided to conference delegates and highlighted here.

The question of definition always emerges when families are discussed. Various authors have put forward definitions to describe their particular perspective. The general spirit expressed at the conference was to embrace a wide diversity of family forms. As Dr. McDaniel indicated in her study paper, ***"In fact if any single word could be used to characterize families in Canada today, that word would be DIVERSITY"***. Some cautioned that attempting to define 'family' could do more harm from being exclusionary than it would do good.

However, unless a definition of family is needed within the context of a program or service, the struggle may be largely an academic problem. As Margaret Eichler, a well known Canadian researcher in the field of sociology notes, ***"Nevertheless, in spite of the difficulty of coming up with a good cut-and-dried definition of the family, if we ask ourselves, or anybody else, who is their family, most people will be able to give a clear and unambiguous answer. For instance, they may say, 'my family consists of my spouse, my children, my parents and Aunt Sally.' However, they may not list Uncle Herbert, because there is very little interaction with him."***

"By looking at what families do we are forced to see family as an open system, interacting continually with society and its systems and institutions. We're saying that families can no longer be viewed as largely closed or private systems. They are part of public life, they function in the public interest and they need a supportive and understanding public."

-Alan Mirabelli,

Vanier Institute on the Family

Within the context of the conference, families were defined in terms of what they do for society:

1. Physical maintenance and care of family members.
2. Having and rearing children through

procreation or adoption.

3. Socializing children for adult roles.
4. Maintaining social order within the family and groups external to it.
5. Producing and consuming goods and services.
6. Maintaining family morale and motivation to ensure task performance both within the family and other social groups.

What is the situation for Alberta families now?

The family continues to form our foundation and provides our stability. But our family and social lives are very different from what they were in previous generations. Social and economic changes in Alberta have affected and are continuing to affect the family. Strong, healthy families manage and adapt to social and economic changes very well. Other families, with different strengths and capacities, find those changes very stressful for family life.

One major result of the economic and social changes is the diversity and complexity of family structures. Today the family can mean blended families, remarried families, single parent families, multi-generational families, as well as two parent families. The following are examples of some of the changes in family form and structure and some of the challenges facing Alberta's families. More complete information is available in the complete set of study papers prepared for the conference.

"Even though there is change in families today, there is also remarkable continuity."

"There is no evidence to suggest that poverty, family violence and sexual abuse are new to Canadian families."

-Susan McDaniel,
Sociologist, U. of A.

FAMILIES, MARRIAGE & DIVORCE

- In 1986, Alberta was home to 616,320 families. The vast majority (88.2%) were husband-wife families.

- The number of marriages in Alberta rose to a peak of about 22,000 in 1981 and declined to about 19,000 in 1986. Between the 1981 and the 1986 Census in Canada, common law unions rose by 37%, while marriages increased by only 3%.

- The divorce rate has increased. An estimated one quarter of 1974 marriages had ended in divorce by 1986. More than 40% of Alberta marriages are now ending in divorce. An increasing proportion of marriages involve one partner who had been previously divorced. By 1986, this was the case in one of three marriages.

CHILDREN

- Families with children, as a proportion of all families, have declined from historical levels, and have remained at 67% since 1981. This is the lowest level in Alberta's recorded history. Slightly less than half of Alberta families (288,710 families) have children under the age of 18. In the past 20 years, the proportion of husband-wife couples with no children at home has doubled.

- Of the families with children under eighteen, 18% were headed by a lone parent. The rate of single parenthood in Canada has dropped slightly. There is a lower proportion of single parents than in 1941, and about the same proportion of single parents as in 1951.

- In 42% of families, one parent stays home to care for the children. About 46% use private child care arrangements with friends, relatives, baby-sitters or nannies. The remaining 12% use the government supported day care system. About 37,000 of the 242,000 Alberta children aged 6 to 12 in 1986 were probably "latchkey" children during non-school hours.

> ***"In Canada in the mid-19th century, at the time of rapid industrialization and urbanization, public leaders saw the family as being in peril. Many of the same concerns about family were expressed about the instability of the family and the need to return to old values."***
>
> ***-Chad Gaffield, Historian, Univ. of Ottawa***

FAMILY INCOME

- From a financial perspective, Alberta families are for the most part rather prosperous. Two thirds are in the middle and upper class, earning more than $30,000 per year, with the average family income in 1985 being $44,197. However, in 1981 dollars, this average family income was below the 1981 level.

- The proportion of Alberta families earning less than $10,000 per year declined from 6.6% in 1981 to 3.8% in 1986, while the proportion earning more than $45,000 increased from 24.3 to 39.3%.

- In 1986, almost 150,000 Alberta households (about one in five households) were at or below the poverty line. Each month in 1989/90, an average of more than 67,000 Alberta households covering about 150,000 Albertans received Social Allowance.

- About another 20% of Alberta households would be classified as 'near poor', being within 20% of the poverty line. The working poor in Alberta number about 29,000 families (those whose household adult members did not, between them, have at least 49 weeks of either full-time or part-time work during the year).

- About one in six (93,000, or 15.3%) of Alberta's children live in poverty (1986 figures). This is slightly better than the Canadian average (17.6%) and slightly worse than Ontario's rate (13.4%).

"It is interesting, though, as we look to the future, to recall the past. Over 2000 years ago Plato wrote 'The nation and the family walk hand in hand. As goes the family, so goes the nation.' This unique interconnection is evident all around us today. Alberta families are changing and as a result, so is our society. Within the span of one generation our society has undergone considerable transition. It is a transition that demands that we reflect on the very meaning and role of families in our lives today."

-John Oldring, Minister,

Alberta Family and Social Services

HEALTH

- Health of family members is one of the important resources of families. The average life expectancy has increased for both males and females, and thus the number of years they will contribute to families. However, those with higher education and income levels can expect to live longer than those with the lowest socio-economic status.

- Early death robs Alberta families of the support and caring they might expect from family members. Those Albertans who died in 1987 of early death (i.e., death before 70 years) lost a total of 84,000 potential years of life from four causes alone - cardiovascular disease, cancer, accidents and suicide. Alberta families therefore lost 84,000 years of contributing family members, in many cases from deaths that could have been prevented or delayed.

EDUCATION

- As of 1986/87, 35% of Albertans 15 years of age and over were high school graduates - the largest proportion of adults of any province. Alberta also had the highest proportion of people with university degrees or certificates (13%). On the other hand, only 20% of Native students finish high school compared with a national average of 70%.

While there is without doubt change in families today, there is also remarkable continuity. Dr. McDaniel points out that ***"families continue to be valued by us as individuals and by society for many of the same reasons they always have. Families are places for caring, for sharing across generations, for having babies and for intimacy."***

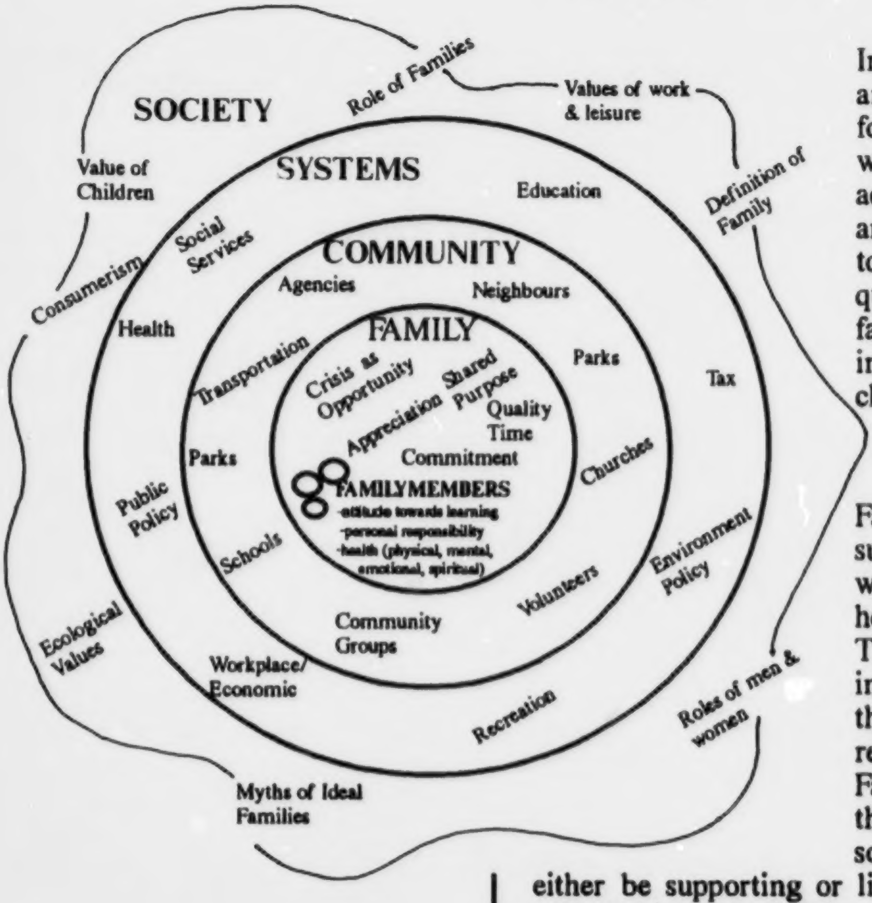
"So we're looking to the future ... we can think of it as new territory that we're moving out into. The future is the context for the rest of our lives and for the families we care for so much. And, like taking any journey, if we pack inappropriately, if we think the land is something other than it is, then the land wins and we lose. In the long run we have to shape our lives according to where we are in history."

-Ruben Nelson,

Futurist and Strategist

4. The Critical Issues Facing Alberta Families: Study Group Results

In looking at the issues which were given priority by the study groups, it may be helpful to assess them from the perspective of a model which illustrates the relationship of the individual and the family to the rest of society.



Individual family members are ultimately responsible for themselves and their well being, being accountable for themselves and acting responsibly toward others. These qualities are nurtured in families who have a critical influence in preparing children for life in the world.

Families, in turn, need the support of communities who, in turn, depend on healthy individuals. Therefore, there is a strong interrelationship between the two, in stimulating and reinforcing each other. Families and communities thrive within a context of societal values that can either be supporting or limiting. These values are reflected in the legislation, policies and programs that are designed to support and assist families.

The delegates met in study groups to discuss and debate their specific study group topics. Their task was to identify the issues of priority which, in their view, needed to be addressed by the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families. A summary of all of the issues is presented here. It is these issues which provide the basis for the Agenda for Action.

A total of 23 study groups in the nine areas met during the conference. Delegates listed all of the issues of concern to them in their selected topic areas. After reaching consensus on the issues of highest priority, group members examined these priority issues in more depth. The implications for Alberta if these issues were not resolved, the benefits if they were, and some potential solutions were discussed. The number of priority issues selected for further discussions varied in each group.

Detailed reports of issues developed by each of the study groups are presented in Appendix B.

Study group members identified the implications of not addressing priority issues. These included continued incidence of family breakdown, decreased workplace productivity, and increased incidence of violence in families, schools and in society. Programs which are short-term and which don't address the underlying causes were viewed as "band aid" solutions which are ultimately more costly, both in human potential and financial terms.

Study group members saw benefits of action to be improvements such as more responsible citizens, families and communities with the skills and resources to support themselves, and a healthier, more productive society. They projected positive effects in financial savings on physical and mental health care, and decreased demands on the variety of social systems needed to help those who are dependent.

"I was very pleased it was not just professionals and government agencies etc., but available to the ordinary citizen for their input."

-Conference participant

"The interaction (in study groups) between professional/non-professional, urban/rural was super"

-Conference participant

"It is sometimes good to talk to people with whom you agree to disagree."

-Conference participant

Study Group Areas

The 23 study groups produced a total of 77 priority issues. There was some overlap among issues where more than one study group addressed a particular topic. With the consolidation of these overlapping issues, 48 priority issues were developed in the nine study group areas. The issues are not necessarily listed in order of priority.

Study Group A: Balancing Work and Family Life.

Three groups each explored their four highest priority issues. The overlap of issues among the groups was consolidated, leading to the following five:

A-1. **Awareness and Attitude must be improved.** It is important that the workplace recognize and learn to adapt to changing family realities, and understand that this is not just a women's issue. There must be increased public awareness of the value of children to society and the need to support parents raising children;

A-2. **The workplace should address family needs**, including issues such as dependent care, parent leave, flextime, affirmative action. There should be flexible and varied employee assistance plans to address differing needs of employees;

A-3. **Fairness in all aspects of the system is needed**, whether parents stay at home or work. Those who try to become more independent must not be penalized in the transition. Flexible benefit packages would allow employers to respond to the diversity of family needs;

A-4. **A review and reevaluation of the role of government and employers is required**, to ensure that both are assuming

> ***"I feel we have been remiss in what we have expected from families in social adjustment to the revolution going on in organizational life ... business, industry and government have passed on their enormous burden of adjustment to the family ... the expectation on the family for adjustments has gone too far. As the next decade will be one of increased organizational turmoil, the demand for adjustment will increase. Something must be done at the front of the problem and not, as is typical, after family breakdowns have occurred.***
>
> ***-Marjorie Blackhurst,***
> ***Blackhurst & Baptist Enterprise, Inc.***

responsibilities which are appropriate to the current situation. There must be increased business awareness of day care and parental leave, as well as more empathy towards parents and children; and

A-5. **Increase support resources in the community** available to working parents, through increased involvement and support of volunteers.

Study Group B: Families and the Community.

Three groups explored a total of 10 issues. The overlap of issues among the groups was consolidated, leading to the following seven:

B.1 **The community must be empowered.** Economic and education strategies are required, as well as approaches which allow communities to plan, develop and implement decisions in concert with family and community needs;

B-2. **More linkages and coordination are required.** A community's resources must be identified so that more coordination and less duplication will occur. There must be linkages between physical, economic and social planning, and there is a need to do better at determining the social consequences of economic priorities;

B-3. **A working definition of family and of community** is required;

B-4. **Changes in personal and family expectations are needed.** Personal responsibility must be nurtured in individuals and families by supporting self esteem and self reliance;

B-5. **Workplace support for families is required**, including job sharing options, understanding of family needs, training programs, etc.;

"We have the resources within our own community to heal ourselves and we don't need to be sick to be better.

We are the resources.

We can support and heal one another.

And we can help ourselves -

to a more healthful and happier society -

to a more caring community -

to more wonderful families."

-Jean Forest,

Conference Co-chairperson

B-6. **An integrated family policy is needed,** to provide benchmarks on the impact of decisions and policies on the family; and

B-7. **There is a need to build support for prevention programs.**

"It's an old saying that you cannot have a good sailor if they only have to sail on good seas ... If kids never have to face risk, never have to confront pain, fear, loneliness, frustration, they cannot possibly develop adequate levels of self control. What we tend to do as a society is try to make it possible for kids to live their lives without having to face fear and uncertainty - and in the process we imprison them..."

-Ken Low

Action Studies Institute

Study Group C: Supporting and Strengthening Families.

Five groups explored a total of 18 priority issues. The overlap of issues among the groups was consolidated, leading to the following eight:

C-1. **A family policy grid must be established, against which public policy would be evaluated and refined to support the family.** It is important to review the integrated impact of Federal, Provincial and Municipal policies and legislation to ensure that they do not inadvertently work against families or each other. It is essential to create a positive economic and social environment where families can thrive;

C-2. **Individual family members must be empowered and encouraged to accept responsibility;** they need education and support to deal with the stresses and expectations of family living;

C-3. **Children's and adolescents' mental health services** must be enhanced;

C-4. **Resources and support are needed for the family unit.** This includes flexible considerations for tax and pension benefits, as well as workplace support such as on-site day care and part-time benefits. Poverty is an especially destructive force on families and requires attention;

C-5. **A shift toward prevention is necessary;**

C-6. **There must be an increased acceptance of the diversity of families and family** structures. There is a need to engage the community in supporting all families; regardless of race, age, creed, physical environment, ability, sexual orientation, or income level. Families must not be inappropriately labelled;

C-7. **A definition of family is needed**; and

C-8. **Support for groups with special needs must be recognized and addressed** - i.e., support for Metis, Native and Immigrant families for example.

Study Group D: Learning for Living: Strategies for Promoting Family Development.

Three groups explored 10 priority issues. The overlap of issues among the groups was consolidated, leading to the following six:

D-1. **Lifelong learning, or education as a lifelong process** must become more valued and practiced;

D-2. **The community should be the focus for providing support.** Promoting more "neighbourly" support and assistance will help relieve the burden on agencies. The community will require encouragement, training and leadership skills to take on this role in a greater way. Support is required for marriage preparation and parenting courses, programs to relieve language and cultural isolation and counselling, in addition to follow-up support;

D-3. **Prevention needs to be enhanced;**

D-4. **Individuals must be empowered, to allow more choices.** This includes education, information and resources. A wellness/ strength model rather than a medical/ illness/deficit model is important when evaluating individuals' capacities and needs for assistance and in developing programs;

> ***" ...empowerment represents 'a respect for the inherent wisdom of ordinary people, an acceptance of a variety of family forms and styles as valid, a sensitivity to cultural and ethnic differences, and a focus on strengths rather than problems'(Anglin)."***
>
> ***- Lyle Larson***
> ***Sociologist, U. of A.***

D-5. **Coordination and cooperation among services** (including government and volunteer) is essential; and

D-6. **Research is needed into programs designed to help and support families** - both exploratory and developmental.

Study Group E: Financial Health and Families.

Two groups explored the following five priority issues:

E-1. **Policies of the taxation and pension systems must be assessed** to ensure that they support strong family functioning. Concern was expressed that such programs may inadvertently work against families. This includes issues such as deductions at source, maintenance support and treatment of stay-at-home spouses;

E-2. **Funding of social programs** should be changed to incorporate an increased emphasis on prevention, and should honor individual initiative and sense of worth. Funding should ensure a basic income and support not only for those on social assistance, but also for the working poor;

E-3. **Policies must be related to the cause and prevention of inequalities**, to break the cycle of poverty through education and support. More research and education on the characteristics of social allowance recipients and the working poor is needed;

E-4. **The declining financial health** of families, particularly single parent female heads, needs attention. Restructuring of social service programs to meet the changing needs and diversity of families is required. Some resolution of this issue could be achieved by examining the causes and dimensions of poverty in Alberta with

"Although the statistics reveal that the majority of Alberta's families are relatively prosperous, we must also be cognizant of the significant number who live in poverty. The increase in the number of children receiving Social Allowance attests to the steady growth in the numbers of children of poor families. The fact that children living in poverty face considerable risks is evident in the correlations between low incomes, infant mortality, and child health and welfare status."

-HSP Humanite Services Planning Ltd.

recommendations for action to eliminate poverty. People who are experiencing the problems should be involved in developing solutions. Community development in economically disadvantaged communities and media opportunities to broaden public awareness and support for building healthier communities are also potential strategies; and

E-5. **All government programs, services and legislation should support families.** A family impact statement, as well as a set of objectives and principles to guide the government in reviewing and designing programs and legislation to meet the changing needs and diversity of families would be of assistance.

Study Group F: Health and Families.

Two groups explored eight priority areas. The overlap of issues among the groups was consolidated, leading to the following seven:

F-1. **Better communication is needed between government departments** to ensure groups such as the mentally ill are not left to find their own way through the bureaucratic maze, and to ensure reduction of unnecessary duplication and competition for resources. This relates especially to health, education, and social services, and includes the agencies funded by and associated with these departments;

F-2. **Family involvement in health education** for students should be enhanced;

F-3. **There needs to be more accessibility to a wide range of community based health care services**, including alternate health related services. Outlying areas must have access to treatment and prevention services

"Most things that impact health happen outside the health care system and have mostly to do with our sense of control over our environment.

...The Healthy Communities Project is a mechanism to solve some problems in the community in order to make it a healthier place, in the broadest sense. More importantly, people get an understanding and an experience of how they can control things in their environment."

-Susan Berlin

Canadian Healthy Communities Project

"Values are patterns of energy. The seven elements (raised by Dr. Garbarino) all tie into - how do we pattern our energy ... how does our pattern of energy reflect that we love our children? What are our family rituals? How do children get a sense of belonging to something greater than themselves?"

-Maggie Hodgson, Nechi Institute.

through approaches such as mobile services;

F-4. **There needs to be an increased focus on health promotion and disease prevention,** including rewards and incentives for being healthy and well. A multidisciplinary approach to health promotion has the most likelihood for success;

F-5. **Recognition and support for family caregivers is important** for strong family functioning. Respite support, as well as community-based education, incentives and programs in all aspects of family life are required;

F-6. **Healthy public policy is needed** in such areas as a Children's Bill of Rights, food labelling, the environment, and healthy workplaces as well as with respect to day care standards and availability. Family policy, programs and legislation should be reviewed; and

F-7. **Family violence must be addressed** through such strategies as education for judges, lawyers, police, teachers, and agency staff; and more support groups and shelters for victims.

Study Group G: Families and the Education System.

Two groups explored seven priority issues. The overlap of issues between the groups was consolidated, leading to the following five:

G-1. **Children must be provided the education** that will enable them to meet the needs of today and tomorrow. An emphasis should be placed on educating students for their role as responsible, ethical decision makers;

G-2. **Education is a shared responsibility** of the child, family, school and community groups (such as police, churches, community leagues, businesses, taxpayers, etc.). We need to develop "organic" partnerships which share common goals to meet the needs of each individual child. Grass-roots consultation and input should replace top-down planning;

G-3. **The quality and appropriateness of education programs** needs to be improved and equitable access to these quality programs needs to be ensured. Better quality and more appropriate programs could be achieved through involvement of the parent, student and teacher in defining programs and ensuring accountability, through teacher training and teacher support, and through programs to introduce educational programs to parents. The issue of equitable access should not be considered solved solely by distance education;

G-4. **The roles and responsibilities of the school and families** on moral issues need to be clarified. Parents want to have more access to teaching materials, as well as more forums between teachers and parents; and

G-5. **Resources for education can be optimized and improved**, by reducing duplication and encouraging voluntary contributions. Communication and understanding of the roles and contributions of all parties is required, in order to improve coordination. The contribution of businesses and parents to the education of children should be recognized. Such strategies as tax credits for businesses who support partnership programs could be utilized. Communication departments for school boards should be established to enhance relationships between schools and the community.

"Adults present themselves as powerful role models for children when they are observed using learning as a tool for change. As children come to understand that the continuous change around us produces the need for continuous behaviour change, they begin to see learning as a tool for coping with everyday situations, for increasing individual well-being and for enhancing personal empowerment."

-F. June Morgan

F. June Morgan Enterprises Ltd.

H. Families and Leisure.

> *" ... leisure, balance, joy and families. Families need permission to be spontaneous. The pace in our society is increasing rapidly, so it's even more critical to lighten up."*
>
> *-Bob Woodburn, RETHINK Inc.*

One group explored the following three priority issues:

H-1. **An awareness and ability to choose wisely from a variety of leisure opportunities**, both structured and unstructured, can be created by introducing education and lifestyle practices early in life. Such education must be available to all ages and abilities, and should focus on family groupings rather than only on individuals;

H-2. **Access to leisure opportunities must be improved**, through strategies such as more parks in urban areas, rural/urban exchanges, more resources for operating costs, and more effective promotion of available leisure opportunities; and

H-3. **Advocacy and lobbying is important**, both to promote the development and provision of leisure for all Albertans, and to ensure strategies are implemented. Advocacy is also needed on behalf of groups who have been inadvertently excluded from some kinds of leisure activities and in support of improved marketing and education programs.

Study Group I: Families and the Law.

Two groups explored five priority issues. The overlap between the groups was consolidated, leading to the following three:

I-1. **There is need for a new Family Law Act**, and a reconstruction of the legislation pertaining to family law. Existing proposals in Alberta and elsewhere on support, children and cohabitation need to be reviewed. Action needs to be taken to ensure a unified comprehensive approach to the modern family, and a more humane approach to Family law;

1-2. **Definition of the family is necessary** to define responsibilities and rights of 'family members', reduce gender inequality, and make the law, programs, and services more appropriate to today's society. Consideration must be given to the child, biological parents, step parents, adoptive parents, grandparents, adults in the house, and significant adults to the child; and

1-3. **Public education and awareness of family laws are needed.** This could be provided through forums such as the school system, adult education courses, workplace information, and a centralized information bank.

" ... the current legal situation of Alberta families (relates to) the obligations and rights of family members and to family reorganization following marital breakdown. The nature and scope of the legal issues affecting Alberta families and their members ... include: the rights and status of children, adult dependent family members and elderly family members; matrimonial property rights and inheritance; marriage breakdown; mediation; property division; support of spouse and child; and custody and access."

- Peter Lown, M.L. (Marnie) McCall and Joseph P. Hornick,

Institute for Law and the Family

"This conference was planned, not as an end in itself, but as a beginning. A beginning that involves all Albertans. It is the beginning of a renewal that will strengthen our families and our future. ...It is a transition that demands that we reflect on the very meaning and role of families in our lives today. And it demands that we develop a new partnership - a new partnership based on unity, based on trust and commitment and working together in harmony."

-John Oldring,
Minister,
Alberta Family and Social Services

Themes

In assessing all of the issues of the 23 study groups, eight themes emerged that cut across all study groups. Each of the priority issues discussed by the study groups fits within one or several of these eight themes:

1. *A need to respond to changing cultural values;*
2. *A stronger focus on prevention;*
3. *Recognition of the importance of balance between work, leisure,and family responsibilities;*
4. *The benefits for families from coordination and linkages between programs, and a partnership of all groups and individuals with the families they serve;*
5. *A need for responsive systems and a change in design and functioning of systems to address current and future social situations;*
6. *The need for community involvement and community empowerment;*
7. *The recognition of the need for lifelong learning; and*
8. *The critical need of families to have financial health as well as skills and knowledge in order to be strong and successful in this society.*

These themes form the basis for the Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families.

5. Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families

The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families was established to act in an advisory capacity with respect to government policies, programs and services which may impact on family life in Alberta. Specifically the Council will:

1. seek practical advice from all Albertans on how Government can strengthen the family;
2. recommend ways Government can encourage the partnership between the community services components of public, private and volunteer agencies and institutions;
3. assist in creating public awareness on matters of interest and concern to families;
4. advise the Minister on impacts on the family associated with proposed Government initiatives; and
5. assist the Government with other activities deemed important by the Minister.

The conference was designed to provide the first step in this consultation process by identifying the issues of priority which form the Agenda for the Premier's Council.

The Council will use a variety of strategies to get input, including regional symposiums, town hall meetings, written briefs or submissions, and one-on-one discussions between Council members and Albertans they meet. Where it deems appropriate, the Council may arrange for research into particular topics.

Through the Council, Albertans will make recommendations to the Premier on those strategies

"I make a commitment to families in general, and to all members of families - mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, daughters and sons, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters, cousins, stepparents, grandparents, foster parents ... my commitment is to do everything I can to serve and to see that Alberta families are strong, are happy and everything they're intended to be."

-Stockwell Day, M.L.A.,

Chairman, Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families

and solutions best undertaken by government. The Council will recommend and advocate to the private sector and communities, the strategies and solutions best undertaken by those sectors.

Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families

Agenda for Action

The discussions in the conference raised many issues for the agenda of the Premier's Council. The issues trigger a number of questions, which have been set out here to assist in the examination of each agenda item.

It is these agenda items that the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, and Albertans collectively, must explore and debate. It is in grappling with these and other questions that Albertans will address the challenges that lie ahead, and develop options and strategies to strengthen and support families.

1. ***How can we best foster cultural values that match the current and future social environment so that families can thrive?***

Cultural values must reflect the reality and acceptance of diversity of family types and structures; a broad definition of families is needed. Multiple program delivery models will ensure that a wide variety of programs fit the range of needs for services. Equitable treatment of all must be ensured. Recognition of the importance of children, support for parents' roles; a focus on strengths in families and communities rather than just on needs and deficits; and recognition of a changing environment and openness to change are required. Myths about "ideal" families must also be dispelled - the role of television and the educational system are critical in this area.

- What myths about families do we hold that are no longer valid? How do we become more accepting of diversity? Can we raise community awareness of the need to support all families, recognizing that families take many forms?
- How do we change from a focus on illness and deficit to a focus on wellness and strength?
- How do we change the stigma about learning all through life about being an effective parent, spouse and family member?
- How do we bring people to an openness and acceptance of change? How do we empower and encourage individuals to accept more responsibility?
- What measures can be implemented in the workplace in recognition of the changing realities for families?
- How do we encourage people to appreciate more fully the value of children to society?
- What is the role of schools? of the media?

2. How best do we address the desire to give attention to more preventive services for families without jeopardizing the necessary rehabilitative and treatment services?

Services and supports to families which focus on growth and development as well as problem avoidance/minimization need to be given increased attention. A health promotion/community development approach to strategies is also important. Supporting individuals and families to function as independently as possible should be the objective of any intervention. Criteria for resource allocation are critical, since the current system appears to place greater emphasis on child welfare and protection systems than on helping parents fulfill child rearing responsibilities. Money and support services are more readily available to assist with child rearing

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when a child is removed from the family than to help parents carry out this task within the family context.

- Do we incorrectly think of prevention as only before" and rehabilitation only after", instead of thinking of serving people in a way that allows them to function as independently as their capacity will allow?
- Can we develop a perspective where prevention and rehabilitation are not either/or, or a battle for fixed resources?
- How do we find a way to make prevention as much a priority as treatment and rehabilitation?
- Can we justify spending money and energy on programs which might help someone sometime down the road instead of helping people who are clearly in crisis right now?
- Do we have enough information to assess which types of prevention services really work?

3. What mechanisms and workplace supports must we put in place to make it easier for Albertans and Alberta families to have a balance of work and leisure?

Balance in work, leisure and other activities is essential for well rounded individuals. The role of women as primary caregivers and the implications for their families as a result of dual careers needs to be addressed. The needs of the workplace and the importance of increased productivity will be best met through a balanced approach, which considers the need for decreased stress for family members who have caregiving responsibilities.

- How best can we create awareness and ability to choose wisely from a variety of leisure opportunities?

- Can we develop creative ways to improve access to leisure opportunities?
- Do poor families have the necessary access to leisure activities?
- How best do we address the role of women as primary caregivers and the implications for their families as a result of dual careers?
- If workplaces will benefit, in terms of increased productivity, should employers play a bigger part in ensuring a balance of work and leisure? If so, what role would be appropriate? What other supports, such as dependent care, parental leave, flextime, employee wellness programs etc., need to be put in place?
- How can flexible and varied employee benefit and assistance plans to address differing needs of employees be most effectively implemented?

4. How best can we create a social consensus which will assist communities, service agencies, and all levels of government to work cooperatively towards a common goal of supporting families?

The extent of professional specialization and institutional segmentation has resulted in duplication of services and poor collaboration and cooperation. A social consensus or shared vision would assist everyone in working toward common goals. There should be a greater reliance on neighbourhoods and community resources to reduce the burden on agencies. More networking is needed of information and resources to avoid reinventing the wheel'.

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- What kinds of mechanisms and linkages are needed to improve coordination? Would more coordination save resources, or would we spend more on the coordination? Is there really excessive duplication?

- How can we identify community resources and make everyone aware of their existance so that the necessary linkages will be made?
- What interpersonal skills do we need to develop in order to work in partnership with each other?

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5. How should the systems which impact families respond to address changing realities and ensure that policies support and strengthen families?

Systems must be responsive to families rather than focusing on the needs of the system - i.e., the systems must have a 'customer focus'. In order to ensure responsiveness, attention must be given to criteria such as system flexibility, capability of serving diverse family needs and structures, and equitable access to services. Services must be effectively integrated and coordinated so that people do not 'fall between the cracks'.

There is a need to assess the impact on families of policies, laws, and programs developed at Federal, Provincial, and Municipal levels. Programs, services, and laws must be designed and delivered with the needs and characteristics of families and their social environment at the forefront. A restructured system of family law that reflects current societal needs is critical.

- How, specifically, should we change the design and function of the social services, health, education, recreation, economic and tax systems so they focus more on supporting the family than on the system?
- Can we make changes, (for example in opening and closing hours of schools as well as agency and government offices), to reflect the realities of diverse family schedules and availablility to easily access services?
- What should be the relationship and

responsibilities of families, government, employers? How can we ensure accountability in the systems?

- Do our policies, programs or services inadvertently act against some families or some particular groups, such as stay-at-home parents?
- How can we ensure these systems are predictable and efficient while still being flexible in responding to a diversity of clients?
- How do systems remain open to change? What education and training is needed for professional and volunteer service providers?
- How can governments and agencies become more customer-focussed?
- Do we need a definition of family? What are our objectives in defining the family - do we need different definitions for different purposes?
- What changes are needed to family laws in order to address the diversity of families and meet their changing needs?
- Where do we put our time, energy and financial resources for the greatest benefit of all? How do we balance the needs of one special group with the needs of another?
- How can we best address the special needs of Metis, Native and Immigrant families?

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- What level of children's and adolescents' mental health services are needed and how should these services be coordinated?
- What level of supportive resources must be available in the community? What are the options for identifying community resources?
- What is the most effective way to evaluate the social consequences of economic priorities?
- What public policy on the family is needed? Is an integrated family policy practical? If so, how is it best developed and implemented?

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6. How can we invest energy and resources in the empowerment of communities in their essential role in supporting families?

Grass roots input in the development and implementation of programs and services for families is increasingly important. The design and delivery of programs to promote the well being of families and to prevent family breakdown should be a shared responsibility of governments, communities, families and individuals. There is a need to identify resources within the community which support families and to develop strategies to more effectively mobilize those resources. These resources include volunteers, self help initiatives, support services, funding, education and improved networking, all of which contribute to caring, resourceful communities.

- What do we mean by 'community'.
- In what ways can communities be empowered? Would it be acceptable to have different programs and different levels of services in different parts of Alberta as a result of communities indicating what services they needed?
- What linkages would be required at the local level to ensure integration of physical, economic and social planning?
- What resources would communities need to enable them to contribute more to planning and resource allocation? What changes in procedures, as well as training and education would be required at the provincial level to assist administrators in changing to a new way of operating?

7. ***To what extent can we create an environment where Albertans are open to change and growth, and seek out opportunities for lifelong learning so they can function effectively in a changing environment?***

People need to grow and change in order to continue to function effectively in a changing environment. Opportunities and supports must be provided to assist individuals to solve their own problems - whether through public education and awareness, information and resources or other forms of support which promote improved self esteem and ability to take responsibility for solving their own problems and making positive lifestyle choices. Professionals and administrators must continue to learn and stay alert to changes in their field.

- What does lifelong learning mean?
- What kind of learning opportunities for adults are needed? Is there a need for more programs? Is the issue one of motivation? Is there sufficient support for individuals to participate in adult education activities?
- Should we require people to take courses in marriage, family relationships, parenting? Should the government set standards for adult learning opportunities that relate to family relationships, parenting skills, etc.?

8. ***How best can we ensure that families have the skills and financial health they need, in order to be strong and successful?***

The strength of the family and the strength and vitality of the society are interdependent. Institutions in society are reliant on individuals with skills, knowledge, health, emotional maturity, personal power and responsibility. These individuals are created by strong families with the support of

Agenda for Action

for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families

communities and institutions. Families depend on financial support from productive workplaces which contribute to and depend on a vibrant economy. All these systems must support and reinforce each other in positive ways.

Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families

Strong financial status is associated with educational achievement and good health. Family members' earning power, their ability to manage their financial resources wisely, and the safety net we have in place to ensure adequate financial resources for the family are all critical to the strength and vitality of our society.

- How do we help family members develop skills, knowledge, health, emotional maturity, personal power and personal responsibility as well as earning power?
- How best can we help children to develop the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of today and tomorrow and to be responsible, ethical decision-makers? What are the roles of schools, families and the wider community?
- Is sufficient attention being given to prepare people for their role and responsibility in a marriage relationship and as parents?
- How can families learn to turn out not just human resources, but resourceful human beings who can find their own way?
- Do families and family members need an ally or advocate to speak for them at the strategic policy level? Do we need a Children's Bill of Rights or a body like a Family Rights Commission?
- How broadly should the financial safety net for Alberta families extend?
- How do we best grapple with poverty and its widespread effects? What are the root causes of poverty and how can we affect them?
- How best can we help vulnerable groups to identify their resources and to use them to

begin to help themselves?

- What financial and non-financial support should we provide to family caregivers?

Conclusion

This report of the conference establishes the Agenda for Action for the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families, and provides a discussion paper for the exploration of issues with Albertans throughout the province. The Speech from the Throne identified the need to keep Alberta families strong. The involvement of all Albertans in recommending strategies and solutions to support and strengthen Alberta families was the vision behind the establishment of the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference and the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference was a vision realized by The Honourable W. Helen Hunley. As we move forward to discuss and explore the issues critical to Alberta families today and into the future, let us remember her words in opening the conference:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, our families mean many things to us.

They are where we learned about the world around us and our role in it.

They are where we developed the skills and attitudes that allow us to succeed in life.

Through them we developed as a province and faced the challenges of our past.

And, through them we will meet the challenges of the future."

"The ultimate success of this conference cannot of course be assessed at this time. The proceedings have met and even surpassed our expectations, but the ultimate success will depend, not upon the proceedings themselves, but upon the initiatives that are undertaken and that are implemented as a result of these proceedings. Only when we can look back on them, in place and working, will we know that we've really climbed that mountain."

-Jean Forest,

Conference Co-chairperson

6. Bibliography

Anglin, J. 1989. ***"Parenting and Parent Support: New Understandings Lead to Innovative Programs."*** Transition, December: 6-7

Eichler, M. 1983. ***Families in Canada Today: Recent Changes and Their Policy Consequences.***, Toronto: Gage Publishing Ltd.

Stinnet, N. and Defrain, J. 1985. ***Secrets of Strong Families.*** New York: Berkley Books.

Study papers for the conference are available by writing to:

Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families
c/o Family Initiatives Division
Alberta Family and Social Services
10th Floor, 10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3E4

Tapes of workshop sessions are available for sale from:

Kennedy Recordings
RR #5, Edmonton, Alberta
T5P 4B7

Changes in Alberta Families.

Information on this general topic is found in the study paper ***"Families Today: Change, Diversity and Challenge"***, by Susan A. McDaniel.

A. Balancing Work and Family Life

Information on this topic is found in the study paper ***"Balancing Work and Family Life"*** by Mary Woodbury; and workshops A1 ***"Every Family is a Working Family"*** (Alan Mirabelli), A2 ***"The Workplace and its Impact on Families"***(Marjorie Blackhurst), and A3 ***"Child Care Revisited"***(Kathleen Gallagher Ross).

B. Families and the Community

Information on this topic is found in the study paper ***"Families and the Community"***by Lyle Larson; and workshops B1***"Role of the Community in Family Life"***(Susan Berlin), B2 ***"Families and Community Planning"***(Walter Jamieson), B3 ***"Today's Families"***(Susan McDaniel), and B4 ***"Impact of Cultural Values"***(Ulmar, Ross, LeGrange and Cardinal).

C. Supporting and Strengthening Families

Information on this topic was presented in the study paper ***"Supporting and Strengthening Families"*** by Michael W. Goldstein; and workshops C1 ***"Families, Government and You"***(Couchman & Norquay), C2 ***"Families as Caregivers"***(Dianne Kieren), C3 ***"Supporting Vulnerable Families"***(Dawn Walker), C4 ***"Ethics, Values and Family Traditions"***(Chad Gaffield), and D5 ***"Our Children - Our Future"***(Ken Low).

D. Learning for Living: Strategies for Promoting Family Development

Information on this topic was presented in the study paper ***"Learning for Living: Strategies for Promoting Family Development"***by F June Morgan; and workshop D1 ***"Promoting Family Development"***(William S. Griffith).

E. Financial Health and Families

Information on this topic was presented in the study paper ***"Alberta's Families: Financial Health Status Report"*** by HSP Humanite Services Planning Ltd.; and workshops E1 ***"Poverty and its Impact on Families"***(Ruth Berry), and B2 ***"Individual Responsibility for Financial Planning"*** (Elaine Barnes).

F. Health and Families

Information on this topic was presented in the study paper ***"Health and Families"***by Joel Christie; and workshop F1 ***"Promoting Healthy Lifestyles"*** (Priscilla Koop).

G. Families and the Education System

Information on this topic was presented in the study paper ***"Families and the Education System"*** by Mary Woodbury; and workshop G1 ***"Complementary Roles: Schools, Families and Communities"***(Susan J. Ditchburn).

H. Families and Leisure

Information on this topic was presented in the study group ***"Families and Leisure"***by Jarmila Horna; and workshop ***"Leisure, Balance, Joy and Families"***(Bob Woodburn).

I. Families and the Law

Information on this topic was presented in the study paper ***"Alberta Law and the Family"***by Lown, McCall,& Hornick); and workshops I1 ***"Family Obligations: The Law"***(Cruickshank, Robertson, & Davies) and I2 ***"Family Reorganization: The Law"***(Pask, Ziff & Flatters).

CELEBRATING ALBERTA'S FAMILIES

APPENDIX

Appendix to the Report of The Lieutenant-Governor's Conference - Celebrating Alberta's Families

Edmonton, Alberta
February 19-21, 1990

May 15, 1990

The logo symbolizes the strength and unity that come through love and commitment in families. The dynamic nature of family relationships in a changing environment is like the inter-play of patterns and colours in the kaleidoscope. Each colour quadrant reflects the uniqueness of family members connected through caring; the heart holds a part of each to create the whole. The four corners are metaphors for the different forms of support needed by all families to grow and thrive.

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

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Appendix A

Target Group

Appendix A - Target Group

The following organizations were identified as having an interest in families and were invited to send delegates:

ACCESS Network

*Al Shamal Temple

Alberta 4-H Council

Alberta Adoptive Parents Association

Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission

*Alberta Association for Homemakers

Alberta Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

*Alberta Association for the Dependent Handicapped

Alberta Association for Young Children

Alberta Association of Family Day Home Services

*Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies

Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties

Alberta Association of Registered Nursing Assistants

Alberta Association of Registered Occupational Therapists

*Alberta Association of Rehabilitation Centres

Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families

Alberta Association of Social Workers

Alberta Association of YWCAs

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

*Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association

Alberta Centre for Well-Being

*Alberta Chamber of Commerce

Alberta Citizens Coalition on Advocacy for Children

*Alberta Committee on Disabled Citizens

Alberta Community Health Nurses Society

Alberta Council of Women

*Alberta Council of Women's Shelters

Alberta Council on Aging

*Alberta Council on Children and Youth

Alberta Cultural Heritage Council

*Alberta Dental Association

Alberta Farm Women's Network

*Alberta Federation of Metis Settlements Association

Alberta Federation of Women United for Families

Alberta Foster Parent Association

Alberta Friends of Schizophrenics

Alberta Home Economics Association

*Alberta Hospital Association

Alberta Human Rights Commission

Alberta Human Services Association

Alberta Law Reform Institute

Alberta Medical Association

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

*Alberta Medical Association Preventive Medicine Committee

*Alberta Multicultural Commission

*Alberta Native Women's Association

Alberta North Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Church

*Alberta/NWT Network of Immigrant Women

Alberta Public Health Association

Alberta School Trustees Association

Alberta Sport Council

Alberta Status of Women Action Committee

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

Alberta Vocational Centres

*Alberta Women in Support of Agriculture

Alberta Women's Institutes

Albertans in Poverty

*Associated Canadian Travellers

Association for Individual and Family Education

*Association for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth

Association for Youth in Care

Association of Chiefs of Police for Alberta

Avenue 15 Calgary Youth Centre

Baptist Joint Committee on Canadian Public Life

Big Brothers and Big Sisters

Birthright

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

Boy Scouts of Canada

Boyle Street Community Services Co-op

Boys and Girls Clubs

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

*Calgary Coalition on Family Violence

Calgary Egmont/Willowridge Community Association

Calgary Family Service Bureau

Calgary Handi-Bus Association

Calgary Multicultural Centre

Calgary Parent Council

*Calgary Regional Association for Quality Child Care

Campus Crusade for Christ

Camrose and District Support Services

*Camrose Lutheran University College

Canadian Advisory Committee on the Status of Women

*Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association

*Canadian Federation of Independent Business

*Canadian Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths

Canadian Health Care Guild

Canadian Mental Health Association

Canadian Native Friendship Centre

*Canadian Organization of Small Business

*Canadian Paraplegic Association

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

*Canadian Red Cross Society

Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family

Canadian Sunday School Association

*Capitol Region Improvement District

Catholic Social Services

Catholic Women's League of Canada

Central Alberta Group Psychotherapy Centre

Central Alberta Refugee Effort Committee

Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter

Centre for Child and Adolescent Development

Changing Together - Centre for Immigrant Women

*Child Care Network

*Child Care Workers Association of Alberta

Childscope

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

*Citizens for Public Justice

City of Calgary

City of Calgary Police Service

City of Calgary Social Services

City of Edmonton

City of Edmonton Family and Community Support Services

City of Edmonton Police Service

City of Fort Saskatchewan

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

City of Lloydminster

*City of Medicine Hat Police Service

City of St. Albert

City of Wetaskiwin

*College of Chiropractors of Alberta

*College of Family Physicians of Canada

*Community Living Society

*Concordia College

Consumer Education Project, Grant MacEwan Community College

*Consumer's Association of Canada

*Day Care Society of Alberta

Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta

Department of Family Medicine, University of Alberta

Department of Sociology, University of Alberta

Department of Sociology, University of Calgary

Department of Sociology, University of Lethbridge

Early Childhood Professional Association

Economic Developers Association

Edmonton Board of Health

Edmonton Child Abuse Committee

Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation

Edmonton Coalition for Quality Child Care

Edmonton Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

Edmonton Council of Churches

Edmonton Family Violence Treatment, Education and Research Centre

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association

Edmonton Jaycees/Junior Chamber of Commerce

*Edmonton Multicultural Society

Edmonton Parks and Recreation

Edmonton Social Planning Council

*Elizabeth Fry Society

*Elks

*Epilepsy Association of Calgary

Family and Community Development Program, Lethbridge

Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta

Family and Youth Division, Provincial Court of Alberta

Family Enrichment Centre

Family Life Education Council

Family Service Association of Edmonton

Fellowship of Christian Assemblies

Flagstaff Adolescence Addictions Society

Focus on the Family

Foothills Hospital

*Gateway Association for the Mentally Handicapped

Girl Guides of Canada

Golden Image Seminars

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

Good Samaritan Society

Goodwill Rehabilitation Services of Alberta

Grande Prairie Regional College

Grant MacEwan Community College

Headstart Program, Elves Memorial Child Development Centre

*Health Law Institute

Health Policy Advisory Committee

Health Unit Association of Alberta

Home by Choice Association of Alberta

*Indian Association of Alberta

Jewish Family Services

John Howard Society of Alberta

Junior Forest Wardens

Junior League of Edmonton

*Kananaskis Improvement District

KARA Family Support Centre

Keyano College

Kids First

King's College

*Kinsmen Club of Edmonton

*Kiwanis Club

*Knights of Columbus Council

*Lakeland College

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

*Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta
Legal Resource Centre
Lethbridge Community College
Lethbridge Family Services
LIFE Foundation Society
Lifelong Education and Resource Network
*Lions Club International
Living Faith Fellowship
Louis Bull Police Department
McLaurin Memorial Baptist Church
McMan Youth Services
*Medicine Hat College
Medicine Hat Day Care Services/Early Childhood Professionals
Metis Association of Alberta
Metis Children's Services
Michener Centre
Mount Pleasant Community Association
*Mount Royal College
Muttart Foundation
*National Action Committee on the Status of Women
Native Counselling Services of Alberta
Native Employment Services Association
NECHI Institute

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

North American Baptist College

Observation Nurseries of Calgary

Office of the Ombudsman

Onoway Village Office

Orphaned Grandparents Association

Parent Centre

Parents Involved As Partners in Education

Parents' Place

Pastoral Institute of Edmonton

*Peace Region Improvement District

Peace Region Teen-Aid

*Personal Community Support Association

*Personal Development Centre

PIN (Parents Information Network) Magazine

Planned Parenthood

Poundmaker's Lodge

Premier's Council on the Status of Persons With Disabilities

*Provincial Advisory Committee on Families

Provincial Senior Citizen's Advisory Council

Psychologists Association of Alberta

Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation

*Red Deer College

Red Deer Family Service Bureau

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

*Rotary Club

*Royal Canadian Legion of Alberta

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Rural Education and Development Association

*Saamis Immigrant Services Association

Salvation Army

Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton

*Shared Parenting Association

Sherwood Park Alliance Church

Social Work Department, Alberta Children's Hospital

Society for Education and Support of Parents

Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired

*Sports Medicine Council of Alberta

St. Anthony's Parish

*Staff Nurses Association of Alberta

*Suicide Prevention Provincial Advisory Committee

Teen-Aid

Teen-Ed of Lethbridge District

Ukrainian Canadian Social Services

*United Child Care Association of Alberta

*United Nurses of Alberta

Ups and Downs

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

Victorian Order of Nurses

Wild Rose Foundation

William Roper Hull Child and Family Services

*Women of Unifarm

*Women's Law Forum

Wood's Homes

*YMCA of Alberta

*Young Life in Calgary

*Young Life in Edmonton

Young Men's Christian Association

*Youth Emergency Shelter

Youth Services and Counselling

Public

In addition to the above organizations, members of the public had the opportunity of attending the conference through their MLA's. Twenty nine members of the public were registered to attend the conference.

MLA's

Thirty three MLA's attended the conference.

Government Departments

Thirty government departments, both provincial and federal, sent delegates to the conference.

* Indicates those organizations who declined attendance.

Appendix B

Detailed Worksheets from Study Groups

Appendix B - Detailed Worksheets From Study Groups

A. Balancing Work and Family Life

Study Group #1
Facilitator: Joan Langille

Issue #1: Awareness/attitude.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Explore myths of "traditional" family. Added stress, guilt. Less productivity at home, work, community. More realistic roles in the family. More family breakdown. More stress, burnout. Limited options. Women make uninformed choices about work issues. Workplace not motivated to change attitudes toward women. Less productivity and lack of commitment because workplace doesn't recognize needs of employees.	Healthier attitudes. More personal satisfaction. Realistic view of life, more options/choices. Shared responsibilities. Empowerment of family. Anger and resentment defused. Equity for women in the workforce. Positive action for our future generation. Stable, productive workforce. Loyalty, better use of Human Resources.	Educational awareness. Campaign aimed at various groups.

Issue #2: Workplace addressing family needs.

Implications If Not Addressed

Overburdening of women especially with dependents.

Less productivity and morale.

More mental health problems

Children more vulnerable.

Strain on family relationships.

More family abuse and more stress.

More substance abuse.

Loss of experienced staff.

Increased use of social services.

Benefits If Addressed

Increased morale and productivity.

Improved mental health.

Improved work relationships.

Less absenteeism.

Improved physical health.

Increased self-esteem and better parening.

Possible Strategies

Tax incentive to employees for:

- paternity/maternity leaves
- dependent care (child, elder)
- counselling services
- employee wellness program
- flextime/job sharing
- staff inservices
- parental leave

Awareness of existing Government programs that address this issue.

Issue #3: Quality and availability of child care.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Risk of Children developing: • academic, emotional, social problems • dysfunctional relationships as adults • physical problems e.g., disease, abuse, neglect, developmental delays Long term costs to society.	Role of parenting more valued. Family stress level reduced. Long term savings (economic) e.g., remedial problems, delinquency, violence, etc. Money saved now prevents further expenses later. Healthier, more productive society. More choice is available/ better choices (wider variety). Absenteeism is reduced.	**Education:** parenting courses, caregiver training inservice, family life education courses (children too). **Better Standards:** increase ratios of caregivers to children, health and safety training requirements, environmental standards (playgrounds, etc.). **Remuneration/Benefits:** reflect importance of value of child care by increasing salaries. **Consistency of Child Care:** increase knowledge base of children's and families' needs. **Systems of Monitoring Child Care:** impose licensing requirements, Better Business Bureau complaint records, criminal record (nannies, family day homes, workers).

Issue #4: Fairness in all aspects of system.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Women who stay at home are penalized - no tax benefits.	Promotes wellness in homes.	Family Rights Commission.
Extremist groups formed to express anger and concern.	Freedom of choice.	Build a system that allows the parent to stay home.
Fairness issues foster resentment at personal level.	Increases options.	Support to community organizations (for low income families).
Those who try to do well for themselves are punished by losing social subsidies.	Reduces family stress.	Make benefit packages more flexible.
	Less money in subsidies spent by government.	
	Not perpetrating the negative in the system.	

A. Balancing Work and Family Life

Study Group #2
Facilitator: Carl Rausch

Issue #1: Quality of work life.

Implications If Not Addressed

Burnout - stress.

Economic disadvantage for workers with dependents.

Lack of promotion/advances.

Overconcentration of females at lower paying jobs and economic status.

Performance sacrificed at work and at home.

Waste of competent human resources.

Distribution of rewards on a basis other than competence.

Benefits If Addressed

A just system - care for children/elderly without economic penalties.

More equitable opportunities for promotion.

Productive, healthy and satisfied persons.

Maximum use of available human resources.

Less strain on social networks.

Promotion of Chart of Rights principles, ILO principles and United Nations principles.

Possible Strategies

Family leave legislation
- permanent
- part-time
- contract

Affirmative action legislation and programs.

Consistent and just employment standards.

Seminars on work stress and family management more widely available, especially to low income families.

Employee assistance programs (EAPs) e.g., flex time, dependent care, job share, training, multicultural awareness, health and fitness.

Possibilities of working at home, employer flexibility.

Address issues of minimum wage inadequacy.

Pre-retirement training and leave.

After retirement employment possibilities, without loss of benefits.

Issue #2: Responsibilities of governments, employers and employees.

Implications If Not Addressed

Needs will not be identified/ met.

Unhappy workers.

Inflexible workplace.

Unproductive workplace.

Hard to recruit and retrain workers.

Dissatisfied public/poor service.

Costs money to be inefficient.

Poor public image.

Loss of potential to "share" responsibility of costs between three stakeholders.

Benefits If Addressed

Human resources will be valued, thus greater participation and productivity.

Social implications of worker wellness goes beyond workplace (e.g., health care).

Government will be seen to show leadership.

Possible Strategies

Need for dialogue between three groups with facilitating mechanism.

Shared priority setting.

To accept responsibility need to understand issues - awareness and education necessary.

Involvement in needs determination, analysis, decision making and priority setting.

Program development undertaken jointly.

Identify who represents these groups and how to determine their needs.

Issue #3: Dependent care.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Accessibility/Flexibility:		
• part-time work not feasible, thus limited family income • stress increases • forced into full-time work, less time with family	• Families have less stress and more choices.	• Drop-in centres. • Family day homes. • Increased money for flex-time care, all night care or agency based services.
Quality:		
• children have a negative model of behaviour • money thrown away - no guarantees or accountability • opportunities for abuse/ neglect	• "good citizens" - coping skills, self esteem, productive individuals • extensive family involvement • community input	• Training standards: government monitoring a reappraisal of existing standards for consistency according to structured guidelines • non-profit model i.e., volunteer boards, associations
Stability of Staff:		
• harm to pregnant participants • weaker team • incorrect perception resulting in no recognition of what the program and staff can offer to families • program recipients (dependents) experience developmental setbacks • more need for intrusive intervention programs later on • family stress • hire who is available due to poor salaries	• well rounded social beings with great self-esteem, communications skills • professional commitment and self esteem for workers transmits to a stronger, more integrated family-oriented program, flexible and open (includes multicultural values) • recognize differences and enhances families' strengths	• recognized training programs (e.g., community college) • accreditation screening standards (e.g., security clearance, character references) • salaries reflective of educational level and experience • competency assessment

Issue #4: Equality of benefits for stay-at-home parents.

Implications If Not Addressed

Not understood by either side (families desiring different systems of child care).

Decreased number of stay-at-home parent families (less volunteers in communities).

Divides women vs. women.

Choices may be made on basis of economics, rather than what's best for child.

No value to stay-at-home parenting.

Benefits If Addressed

Encourages a diversity of family life.

Gives parents a balanced choice regarding child care.

Recognizes child care as worthwhile work for people (mothers, child care staff, nannies, etc.).

Raises status of women's work.

Encourages women to blend family life and home responsibilities in the long term.

Possible Strategies

Determine financial feasibility.

Clarify and debate the issues.

Corporations need to accept financial responsibilities - instead of heavy reliability (reliance) on taxing families.

Greater recognition on part of employees that parents exit and re-enter workforce - parenting as a career with marketable skills.

Address specifics - e.g., UIC, CPP, pension, tax credits, re-entry and retraining in workforce, leave benefits for part-time workers.

A. Balancing Work and Family Life

Study Group #3
Facilitator: Gail Matheson

Issue #1: Flexible and varied employee assistance plans to address differing needs of employees.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Stress level will continue to increase which will have negative health implications, both physical and emotional.	Society, family and employers will share the delivery of services.	Develop and present seminars around the province which will educate employers and employees of comprehensive family supportive Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).
Employers will continue to depend on public and private care and Social Services, which are already stretched.	Healthier people due to less stress.	Through a public awareness campaign publicly recognize companies' efforts to support employees.
Employee will have increasing difficulty coping in both private and work life.	People have stronger sense of being valued by employer.	Develop resource packages and identify central resource for information on employee assistance.
Constant time restrictions with work and child care detract from employee's ability to fully focus on work and family.	Employees have greater sense of control over their lives and less guilt.	Discuss strategies with labour and union.
Family relationships continue to be strained due to lack of time and energy.	Decrease in absenteeism.	Video or materials prepared which illustrate benefits to society as a whole.
	Increase in company loyalty.	To encourage the development of EAPs that offer a variety of benefits from which employees can choose and which are evaluated and researched by employees annually. Smorgasbord of child care, elder care, counselling, etc.
	Recognition of time needed for family.	
	Affirms the importance of family and the role of caregivers and parents.	

Issue #2: Genuine options for families to ensure good quality care for children.

Implications If Not Addressed

If poor quality child care (e.g., training) won't have the kind of adults we want (productive, creative).

Lack of services and parental leave benefits (e.g., pensions) for parents who stay at home therefore more living in poverty.

More absenteeism at work.

Less productivity.

Burnt out work force.

Health care costs increased.

Continued excess stress on families, e.g., high divorce rate, high family violence rate, high suicide rate.

Benefits If Addressed

Increased value society places on kids and those caring for them.

Less family stress.

Increased productivity.

Less usage of health care.

Empowerment leading to having control over aspects of life.

Increased motivation.

Less turnover.

More people paying taxes.

Possible Strategies

Develop public contact for input.

Develop mechanics for communication with media.

Approach selected business leaders to discuss strategies (circulate research papers for persuasion).

Encouraging government to be role models regarding E.A.P.s - flex-time, employer centred child care, paternity leave.

Explore benefits and options for homemakers.

Issue #3: Public awareness on the value of children to society and need to support parents raising children.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Day Care		
Lack of quality child care.	Skilled workers.	Increased training/education requirements for workers.
	Improved image.	Increase assistance workers for training, E.A.P. benefits.
Education - All Forms		
Continued disintegration of family well-being.	Reaches the masses quickly.	Use Media to send positive messages about family role models.
Parents lack skills to promote self-esteem.	Helps parents cope/teach/ support.	Promote self-esteem in families including children through courses.
Lack of support for non-traditional families.	Helps parents with real challenges of parenting.	Use of role models for parenting to provide examples of successful coping strategies.

Issue #4: Increase supportive resources in the community

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Stress.	Happier families.	Training of volunteers for a variety of support groups (counselling, parenting).
Family violence.	Less need for social agencies.	More community involvement in the elementary grades, i.e., police, seniors, community groups (adopting, grandparent program, etc.).
Breakdown of families.	Perhaps lower taxes due to less preventive programs needed.	Increasing business awareness of day care, parental leave, and more empathy toward parents and children.
Low productivity.	More productivity in the business community.	Government awareness, i.e., • funding for training of volunteers • more promotion of resources through media • more resource people made available for public
Higher crime rate.	Less bureaucratic involvement.	

B. Families and the Community

Study Group #1
Facilitator: Michelle Kirchener

Issue #1: Empowerment of the Community.

Implications If Not Addressed

If you want cost effective solutions, give people resources (dollars and human resources).

If you don't use community resources, you lose money.

Stress is formed on the family if self-help groups are not empowered.

Lack of communication - services are not being used well.

If you don't have community empowerment, you need more government bureaucracy.

Apathy.

Benefits If Addressed

Greater community involvement therefore greater sense of ownership in the community (greater pride and interest, more volunteer help).

Cost effective to have community help themselves.

Health and Social Services cost reduced.

Stronger and healthier family life therefore healthy community.

Links of communication result in cooperation - services are better utilized.

Greater efficiency less bureaucracy.

Independence, confidence, involvement, interest, resourcefulness, sense of belonging.

Possible Strategies

Anti-Poverty Campaign (Edmonton) child poverty action.

Community Economic Development.

Education should be a priority (i.e., distance learning), Head Start, Community schools (decisions to be made with local community authority).

Inter-Agency cooperation.

Issue #2: Social consequences of economic priorities.

Implications If Not Addressed

Increased need for "Band-Aid" services.

Higher levels of unemployment.

Increased disparity in income levels.

Breeds greed.

Benefits If Addressed

Increased self-esteem.

Less stress, more personal control, less family violence, less family breakdown.

Reduced expectations, live within our means.

Less personal and public debt.

Possible Strategies

Discuss and educate.

Research and analyze which will be used by the community.

Neighbourhood discussions.

Issue #3: Linkages between physical, economic and social planning.

Implications If Not Addressed

Planning continue to be reactive.

Continued segmented and disjointed planning.

Fractured decision-making.

Top down planning.

Isolated and disempowered population/community.

Environments that do not address emerging social/ cultural/recreational/ environmental issues.

Benefits If Addressed

Proactive development.

Coordinated - less strain on resources.

Livable communities.

Empowered people and communities.

Social issues would be addressed.

Educated community.

Healthy, strong individuals and families.

Possible Strategies

Planning driven by social need/concerns (not only money).

Inform residents of all options.

Build "bridges" between diverse interest groups.

Develop skills at local level.

Develop flexible structure/ process.

Issue #4: Workplace support for families.

Implications If Not Addressed

Stress (more absenteeism).

Less productivity because of family problems.

Improper placement of values in the employer's eyes.

Lack of communication in terms of productivity.

Lack of cooperation between employers and employees.

Benefits If Addressed

Less absenteeism, holistic wellness, in terms of family, individual and company.

More productivity, less stress due to lighter work load.

Better communication leads to better understandings.

Less stress from family to work and work to family.

Possible Strategies

Job share, trade-off of time.

Omcrease understanding on part of the employer.

Policy instituted to recognize the importance of family state of wellness.

Examine attitudes.

Training programs.

B. Families and the Community

Study Group #2
Facilitator: Carol Stuart

Issue #1: Defining family and community.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
If the family remains unclearly defined or people work from different definitions then it becomes pointless to use the term family in public policy or service delivery. It will not be possible to help a family. Families and individuals in need of service may fall between the cracks and services will be duplicated and resources improperly invested when family remains unclearly defined.	If family is clearly defined then service delivery is optimized and individuals who need help will receive it. Services will be the least intrusive as possible if the definition is clear.	In order to resolve the definitionial issues a variety of strategies are possible. Researching a variety of family definitions is one option. A poll of Albertans to define the term within our province may be useful. Examine the functional relationships of family and community as they currently are.

Issue #2: Identification of community resources.

Implications If Not Addressed

If community resources remain hidden and/or potential resources are not identified and developed then there is potential for duplication of services and the elimination of other needed services. Waiting lists can be long as some families are unable or unwilling to go outside of their community. Funding may be misaligned if community resources are not identified and supported. Volunteers are seen as a cheap service provider rather than a resource to be appreciated and supported. There may be some gaps in services that could be provided by the community.

Benefits If Addressed

Through the identification of resources within the community a better decision making process will occur which includes consultation, a broad base of community input, and enhanced community ownership.

Overall promotion of the communities' well-being can occur.

Community resources will become better allocated and ultimately a cost-saving for social services.

Possible Strategies

A number of strategies to identify and enhance the use of community resources were identified. The use of volunteers can be a major focus but strategies to support and reward voluntarism must be in place. Such strategies could include:

- advanced educational and training opportunities in volunteer management
- tax benefits for volunteers
- commitment of funding to invest in voluntarism and community development as they grow and develop
- targeting specific areas of volunteer availability (e.g., seniors, social assistance)

If issues are identified and resolved at the most local level then community resources are available and utilized at the "front-end" of the process.

Issue #3: Empowering communities to participate.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
The potential that exists in communities can be missed when the top levels of government continue to make decisions without community input. Mistakes will continue to be made resulting in a blaming process. The community will cease to have ownership and the "grassroots" of the community will not be reflected in programs for families.	As communities become empowered to participate in planning, developing and implementing programs the community becomes not only self-sufficient but proud of their accomplishments. The grassroots are involved in the decision making. Through the process the community establishes a resource base and becomes aware of the strength within the community and its existing resources. Learning through experience occurs in the community. The family would become empowered. Often these spin-off results are more important than the original intent of empowering the community.	The process of empowerment should involve: • identification of the key issues and people • gathering information from all levels of support • determine the strategies • compile profile of local talent and an information/resource base.

Issue #4: Changes in personal and family expectations.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
As changes occur in expectations and values related to the family low self esteem occurs and the family will not operate at an optimal level.	If the changes occurring in values and expectations surrounding value transmission are addressed then values can be left intact and/or supported as they are now.	To begin to address this issue the level of awareness regarding options to families should be raised.
If changes do not occur a continual dependency on government will happen.	Family functions will be improved.	Families need to be educated about options and about changes that are occurring. The content of television for example could be addressed and controlled at a community level.
	Better solutions will occur through creativity.	

B. Families and the Community

Study Group #3
Facilitator: Keith Walls

Issue #1: Integrated family policy.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Adverse consequences if all policies are not considered.	Family has priority in government policy.	Bring to constituency meetings.
Financial burden.	Comprehensive policies.	Talk about it at conferences.
People get lumped together.	Coordination of services.	Set up family policy for municipalities and the private sector.
Gaps, overlaps of services.	Clarity for families as to where they fit in.	
		Letters to editor.
		Contact MLA.
		Define family.

Issue #2: Building support for prevention programs.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Temptation to cut programs/ services.	Higher level of understanding and support for prevention.	Review of prevention programs.
Difficult to measure services and justify needs.	Less crime, less cost to society re. treatment, jail.	Argue quality vs. quantity and explain the significance.
Soft services vs. hard services.	Feeling of community-trust and security.	Attempt to quantify what we do in our communities, how we have helped, what we have accomplished, look at trends, numbers, support etc.
Benefits and implications of programs won't be realized.	Sense of satisfaction could lead to re-election of politicians.	Identify new prevention strategies.
	Higher self confidence, self esteem.	Look at new ways of using professionals - to train and support community.
	Most agencies are dependent on statistics to ensure their existence. By providing opportunities for those most likely to succeed in their programs they will encure.	

C. Supporting and Strengthening Families

Study Group #1
Facilitator: Mahlon Weir

Issue #1: Public policy on the family.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
All family members will not be able to live up to their full potential. Families will continue to be devalued.	People will reach their potential, contribute to their families and society resulting in a richer, empowering and productive community.	Inform the electorate. Need a commitment to political action to ensure fairness, justice and equal opportunities for all families. Restructure the tax system. Redistribute money and priorities e.g., family allowance, daycare subsidies. Review all government policies related to the family with regard to the policies' commitments to families. Responsibility for government accountability regarding the family should be elevated to the Deputy Premier level.

Issue #2: Utilizing community resources.

Implications If Not Addressed

Continued duplication in certain areas i.e., homecare.

Continued lack of services in certain areas.

Expending of funds inappropriately i.e., redistribution is needed; education dollars are being spent in non-education care/ services.

Untapped potential not utilized, especially in rural areas.

Sense of competition between government and community groups will continue, rather than working together.

Benefits If Addressed

Efficiency! effectiveness, equity.

More opportunities.

Better utilization of money resulting in more to go around.

Networking will help discover where duplications exist and where other needs not being addressed exist.

Improved quality of life, for individuals and families.

Possible Strategies

Delineation of services.

Accessibility of services needs to be examined.

Community league enhancement.

Cooperation between schools and community agencies for working with children, i.e., community schools.

Development and recognition of lay volunteer training.

Interagency cooperation to address prevention and treatment services.

Volunteer sector initiatives, i.e., tax and time credit on tax return.

Government responsibility for community enhanced (provision of resources) programs must be maintained.

Issue #3: Redefining our mindset.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Money being spent to no purpose.	Better treatments established.	Treatment methods should be evaluated for effectiveness.
"Help" programs are ineffective.	Money used more effectively.	Involve more lay people and volunteers in helping troubled families.
Too much faith is placed on "experts".	Focus on strengths of families.	Promote acceptance of a broader range of family groupings.
Exclude and label basically healthy families, homosexual parents, joint custody families, poor families.	Wide social acceptance of "different" family types/ groupings.	Apply cost-effectiveness standards to expenditures of funds.
Families that experience trouble are judged as ineffective/unacceptable.		

C. Supporting and Strengthening Families

Study Group #2
Facilitator: Cheryl Crocker

Issue #1: Definition of the family.

Implications If Not Addressed

Continuation of a patriarchal system with the power for decision making and who presently defines the family.

Continuation female poverty.

Continuation of conditions which result in family violence and violence against women.

Increasingly inhumane institutions which don't respond to human needs.

Rights and needs of children will not be addressed.

Non control over life.

Benefits If Addressed

Options will be opened for people.

Obligations to children will be fulfilled.

Sense of self for both men and women.

Institutions will move to a more balanced sense of control.

Industry will become family friendly.

Realistic social programs will result.

More even distribution of economic wealth.

Possible Strategies

Expand the definition of family to include the "types" of families that exist: nuclear, single parent, extended, adoptive, gay and lesbian, childless, handicapped/disabled, common-law, two income, and recognize, affirm, and celebrate the cultural, ethnic and spiritual diversity within each type.

Review and revise legislation at the federal, provincial, and local level as it may adversely affect policy impacting upon the family.

Launch an ad campaign to seed new ideas/vision of the family with a specific focus on specific target groups such as children.

Issue #2: Prevention.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Increased cost.	Decreased strain on financial resources.	Reallocation of resources to increase the dollars spent on prevention without adversely affecting the immediate nature of treatment programs.
Increased taxes.	Decreased costs, taxes, family breakdown, violence and abuse, drug and alcohol abuse and illiteracy.	Education and planning done with individual participation at the grass roots level -- a bottom up approach to planning of services.
Increased family breakdown.		Identify potential problem areas -- macro and micro.
Increased violence and abuse.		Services and coordination which emphasize accountability, communication.
Increased drug, alcohol abuse.		Implementation of a multi media strategy with an emphasis on prevention -- "you don't have to be sick to get better".
Increased illiteracy.		
Loss of universality of things like health care, social assistance.		
Increased crime and delinquency.		
Unhealthy communities.		
Decrease in the number of skilled workers.		
Loss of public support for the government/politicians.		

Issue #3: Family Policy Grid.

Implications If Not Addressed

Policies will continue to be driven by politicians.

Policies are one sided.

Loss of accountability.

Resources not used effectively.

No coordinating point for policy making.

No defined process for evaluation.

Lack of ability to respond quickly to changing trends.

Government will be reactive not proactive.

Benefits If Addressed

Allows social consensus before implementing policies.

Coordinating mechanism.

Weighs both sides of the issue.

Would be at arm's length of government.

Government is obligated to be responsive to recommendations.

Sensitive to both government and citizens as it functions between and within the two.

Politicians would make educated policies.

Empowers families, individuals and communities.

Possible Strategies

Create an infrastructure to evaluate what families need from the bottom up and in a democratic way.

Representation should be from all levels including citizens, families, corporate world, academia etc.

Decentralize systems such as taxes to be relevant to individual interests.

Bring the choice of distribution of benefits down to the community level giving the individual the option to purchase support services.

C. Supporting and Strengthening Families

Study Group #3
Facilitator: Bill Forbes

Issue #1: Empowering and encouraging individuals to accept responsibility.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
If we do not accept responsibility all programs and efforts will fail. Responsibility must be at individual and at family levels, i.e., raising our own children vs. universal daycare.	Improves self-esteem, motivation and ability - community pride.	Promote and give recognition to self-help groups.
Governments and other "experts" will assume responsibility if we do not.	Healthy individuals help others to help themselves.	Equip people with appropriate tools i.e., books, resources. Napkin Notes - the Art of Living.
Abdication of responsibility results in unhealthy families and communities.	Discover, develop, deploy natural leadership within communities.	Improve accessability to available Government programs.
Governments will always be the rescuer and will result in waste and expense.	Children observe and learn from good examples.	Remove stigma associated with seeking help i.e., tax deductible marriage counselling.
	More cost effective, reduce deficit.	

Issue #2: Impact of policies - federal, provincial, municipal - on families.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Fragmentation of family - economic development, employment. Mental health of family suffers. Communities become less supportive of families.	Achievement of 8 elements: • security • stability • time together • access to basic resources • belief in ideology • community (respect, spirit) • peace and justice • acceptance • public awareness	Involve family with other interest groups. Impact analysis of all legislation (Family Day). Use media for public education (educate media first!). Evaluate proposed policies through such vehicles as white papers, pilot projects.

Issue #3: Enhancement of children's and adolescent's mental health services.

Implications If Not Addressed

Kids will continue to fall through the cracks - families disintegrate.

Unhealthy, unstable children will become unhealthy, unstable adults - financially, socially.

Revictimization - children who have been abused can't get therapy - again, one is a victim of a lack of services.

Continued increase in juvenile delinquency.

Benefits If Addressed

Healthier families.

Kids who receive treatment become better adjusted members of society.

Possible Strategies

Clarification of responsibilities of Government departments.

Community involvement in solutions.

Increased resources to cover preparation, community treatment, residential treatment (long term treatment) (continuation of care).

Public awareness of society about mental health issues.

Evaluate present resources to make sure they are being effectively utilized.

Issue #4: Engaging of the community to support all families.

Implications If Not Addressed

Increase of substance abuse.

Looking at family with respect to very narrow focus.

Ghettozation:
- increase in discrimination
- increase in violence

Separation of family members.

Loss of cultural awareness.

Lack of access to services.

Lack of attainment of education.

If we don't have a broad definition of family, community won't be able to recognize the varying family units.

Fewer job training programs.

Lack of rural services.

Benefits If Addressed

Less discrimination.

More productive people.

Fewer children apprehended.

Fewer individuals leaving family of origin.

Supporting cultural heritage.

Decline of substance abuse.

Decline of monies spent on remedial work with respect to families.

Increase in self esteem, values/character.

Will maintain family unit.

Protection of all forms of family.

Access to education.

Access to sufficient food and shelter.

Nutrition training.

Society more caring for each other.

Better cross-cultural acceptance.

Improvement of standards of living.

Possible Strategies

Peer counselling.

Counselling for all family members, separately and as a family unit.

Ensure human rights protection for all groups.

Access to training and support (education) to encourage peer counselling.

Using community influence to encourage hiring practices that are fair and community involved.

Accessing community talents/abilities for common good.

Recognize that nobody's perfect.

Bring in outside programs e.g., group to encourage self-help; groups to teach parents parenting and life skills.

School curriculum should be modified to recognize this need.

C. Supporting and Strengthening Families

Study Group #4
Facilitators: Jean Campbell and Joe Hornick

Issue #1: Tax considerations, benefits considerations, recognition considerations for spouses that stay home to look after the children.

Implications If Not Addressed

Less incentive for one parent to stay at home to care for children.

Higher unemployment.

Gives parents less choice in decision to work or not to work.

Increased stress.

Less family unity.

Benefits If Addressed

Better quality managed families.

Increased family time.

Less cost for day care.

Decreased health cost.

Fewer latch-key kids.

Increased voluntarism.

Higher level of caregiving to extended family.

Healthier communities.

Possible Strategies

Change tax law.

Pension plans for stay-at-home parent.

Increase family allowance for low income levels.

Affirm the choice to stay home and care for children.

Dental and eye care for low income families.

Issue #2: Education and support to families at the preventive level to deal with such issues as family violence, choosing day care, etc.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Increased costs of remedial care.	Decreased cost of remedial care.	TV commercial to educate and inform i.e., benefits of family life, child care options, support groups.
Escalating family problems.	Stabilization/security.	Examine home care options.
Unawareness of choices available e.g., support groups, educational programs, child care options, etc.	Individuals empowered to take responsibility.	Develop parent care.
Uninformed/inappropriate choices made.	Positivity of family and community elevated.	Provincial consultant to: • coordinate community resources • be liaison between government/community
	Family unit accepts more responsibility for own quality of life.	Subsidizing unlicensed care i.e., neighbour etc.

Issue #3: Workplace support and education for family needs: job sharing, part-time benefits, on-site day care.

Implications If Not Addressed

Continued and increasing stress on families
- time loss (sickness, leaves, turnover)
- business inefficiencies (loss of competitive position in the marketplace)

Higher costs for remediation/ intervention when problems arise (health care, institutional costs, treatment, education, study/research).

Family breakdown
- societal breakdown (e.g., more kids in care, legal implications - Solicitor General's Department, Young Offenders' Act

Benefits If Addressed

Staff commitment to contribute to their fullest capacity.

Increased productivity.

Recognition of family realities.

Long term intergenerational benefits (e.g., wellness vs. dysfunction).

People feel more empowered and can control their own lives.

Reduced costs of external controls (e.g., correctional services).

Improved quality of life for everyone, including the community.

Improved educational/life skills benefits (investment in our future through enriching our children's lives).

Support for parents on the job means these parents are in a better position to support other community members (e.g., high risk populations).

Possible Strategies

Increase government support for community based services.

Increased financial support for EAPs.

More flexibility in application of employee benefits (e.g., shopping list of benefits).

Built in day to day supports (e.g., exercise, recognition of job performance, emotional support, work teams).

Financial support for construction, operation and staffing of on-site day care.

Legislation for paternity benefits, part-time benefits, job sharing redeployment counselling.

Preparation for developmental stages and tasks (e.g., retirement).

Issue #4: Creation of positive economic and social environment in which parents and siblings can be educated to care for each other and spend quality time together e.g., pension, tax, savings.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Status quo. Increase of family problems • abuses • emotional instability • family breakdown Society breakdown.	Decrease in social service expenditures, in turn diverting these funds to pensions, tax credits, home care of children and elders. Decrease in family breakdown, abuses, stresses. Strong family unit. Better quality of life for family and society. Increase in family community involvement.	Tax incentives, tax breaks for single parent, spouse at home, multi-sibling families. Education • family budgeting • parenting skills • sibling relationships • awareness of support programs and agencies • the realization of a stronger family unit, stronger community and stronger Alberta

C. Supporting and Strengthening Families

Study Group #5
Facilitator: Lynn Bowditch

Issue #1: Support, education and caring for our children and families.

Implications If Not Addressed

Financial burden on society and a decline in value of family.

Lost potential of these children - they cost society rather than benefit.

More polarization.

Volunteer segment being stretched to limit.

"Burn out."

Added costs of professionals.

Benefits If Addressed

Costs for rehabilitation will decrease; finances will be freed to promote "healthy living".

Potential for children is constructive rather than destructive.

Less polarization, appreciation and recognition of differences.

Family unity - costs are lower if children are within own family.

Children learn what they live.

Volunteers wouldn't be stretched to the limit (i.e., 3 year average foster parent).

Trained child care workers to have more rewarding, less stressful jobs.

Possible Strategies

Identify and educate community to easily accessible (24 hours and rural) and affordable services.

Coordination and collaboration of services.

100% essential services funding so that donations may be used for support services and enhancement of services.

Early identification and intervention which may prevent damage entirely.

All levels of government and agencies should cooperate in sharing and educating communities about services available.

Professionals need to educate parents and volunteers with regard to support groups.

Use the media (i.e., television) as a tool.

Issue #2: Poverty as a destructive force on families.

Implications If Not Addressed

Trend toward have and have nots will continue.

Problems within families will become greater given the economic stress and reduced opportunities.

Has a direct impact on institutionalization and crime rate, etc.

Increased political instability as people group to address it.

Abuse, lack of aspirations, and incentives gets passed on from one generation to the next (despair).

Suicide rates, illness, infant mortality rate increase.

Benefits If Addressed

Healthier, more productive society.

Less social and economic costs.

Less stress on society as a whole.

Recognition that poverty is not a way of life.

Less expectation by families that the social system will take care of them.

Possible Strategies

Tie social allowance realistically into the Consumer Price Index.

Access to more educational funding for individuals who were under the custody of Child Welfare. This should extend to the age of 25 or 26 years should they decide to return to school.

Working poor should be heavily supported for housing, day care, counselling and training.

Community based policy on poverty.

Community based boards of directors for regional and local offices of Alberta Family and Social Services.

Youth and adult long term work experience programs combined a "staged" educational upgrading system.

Increase the amount of money clients can earn before the department starts to reduce welfare.

Legal advocates for disadvantaged families and youth.

Issue #2: Poverty as a destructive force on families (continued).

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
		Clients are capable of making the best decisions given the supports at their disposal and should be treated that way.
		Educate clients on the legislation and policies that affect them. Make them educated consumers.
		Recognize that single women who are head of households need support more quickly than others.

Issue #3: Changes now/prevention now (a shift toward prevention).

Implications If Not Addressed

By not moving to prevention we cannot keep up with rehabilitation.

The cost of rehabilitation is too high - both financially and in lost human resources.

Frustration and burn out of staff and volunteers requiring more support for them (geometric escalation of the problem).

Those who are already being compromised (sick, those in poverty) will not be able to continue carrying the burden.

Benefits If Addressed

Solve the problem before it happens.

Solve the problem before it gets worse.

Solve the problem before it's too late.

Political benefits
- role in world seen as positive (proactive)
- cost benefit reduce social and financial cost
- long term benefit (even though increased short term costs)

"Saving" the workers/ volunteers can give time and attention to building society/being creative
- well people do positive things

Possible Strategies

Monitoring and evaluating existing and proposed policies and programs in terms of their effects on the family.

Refer to: A Strategy for Strengthening Families: Using Family Criteria in Policy Making and Program Evaluation. A Report of the Family Criteria Task Force. Theodora Dons and Steven Preister.

Empowering families.

Educational programs e.g., pre-marriage, parent support, marriage enrichment, pre-parent learning, communications skills (programs that deal with communication skills and learning how to act in relationships).

Cooperation among organizations in community.

Community development programs supported financially with government funds and the human resources from the volunteer network.

Issue #3: Changes now/prevention now (a shift toward prevention).(cont.)

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
		Media affirmation of families e.g., AADAC - implemented on a broader scale to promote family values and healthy ways of relating to this in society.
		These strategies need to be policy driven at a comprehensive level e.g., government department, corporate level, integrated preventive orientation.
		Needs of minority families (racial minorities, those with disabilities) be addressed as there may be needs different from the status quo.

Issue #4: Support for Metis families.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Needs of Metis families will not be adequately met until they are developed, designed and delivered by Metis people themselves. Cost to government re: above.	Families begin to feel a sense of empowerment and belonging (ownership). Save money.	Views need to be listened to. Community development approach. Accountability • programs • Metis communities political M.A.A. Need own definition (prevention, intervention). Transfer of authority via Framework Agreement.

D. Learning for Living: Strategies for Promoting Family Development

Study Group #1
Facilitator: Andy McPhee

Issue #1: Prevention.

Implications If Not Addressed

Increase in family violence.

Teenage pregnancies.

Substance abuse.

High rate of divorce.

Suicide.

Aids.

Complications in care of aging.

Increased costs in treatment/reactive services.

Loss of productivity.

Benefits If Addressed

Reduced cost of Social Services "eventually".

Increased productivity.

Increased social stability.

Less dependency.

Greater self-esteem.

Decreased human misery.

Possible Strategies

Research into what factors contribute to family strength and stability.

Suggest funding this research with money from Alberta Drug and Alcohol Abuse Foundation.

Education based on above research findings.

Promoting positive models.

Awareness of available resources.

Support and encourage the promotion, education and awareness at the local level.

Emphasis on volunteers.

Ensure adequate funding of existing agencies rather than creating new agencies or bureaucracy.

Issue #2: Support services.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
High incidence of corrective treatment.	Better quality of life.	Using volunteers.
Patterns of continued abuse are established.	Less cost to tax payer.	Funding for volunteer coordinators for existing agencies.
Higher burden on tax payers.	Breaking of destructive patterns.	Continuing training of volunteers.
Higher burden on justice system.	Less utilization of the justice system.	Establishing a network for existing agencies both government and non-profit.

Issue #3: Identify value of life long learning.

Implications If Not Addressed

High incidence of corrective treatment.

Patterns of continued abuse are established.

Higher burden on tax payers.

Higher burden on justice system.

Benefits If Addressed

There will be creative approaches in addressing different learning patterns.

Improved communication within families.

People will be receptive to new learning and have the courage to be imperfect.

Increased awareness to alternatives which should lead to improved personal decision making.

Improved character virtues.

Possible Strategies

Use of mass media for
- programming - making programs more in the style of mass media so they will be accepted by more people
- getting the message across e.g., AADAC, Mormon Church ads

Finding out where the community is.

Make learning fun/positive/humorous.

Address life cycle needs such as intergenerational care.

Take programs to where the people are e.g., in daycares, high schools, senior's groups.

Formally support "learning for living" programs.

D. Learning for Living: Strategies for Promoting Family Development

Study Group #2
Facilitator: Carol McArthur

Issue #1: Moving from a medical/illness/deficit model to a wellness/strength model.

Implications If Not Addressed

Dependency.

Growth in costs.

Vicious circle of stigmatization.

Benefits If Addressed

Earlier recognition of problems.

Virtuous circle of empowerment and promotion of competency.

Mutual support and an enhanced sense of community.

Reduced labelling and stigmatization.

Prevention rather than treatment after the fact.

More acceptance of diversity.

Possible Strategies

Design a program to deliver wellness content through:
- School System
- Churches
- Community Organizations
- The Workplace
- Mass Media

Design innovative ways to motivate people to participate e.g., develop incentives.

Examine personnel policies to ensure they support a wellness focus.

Issue #2: Promoting community/neighborhood rather than relying on agencies -- leadership skills.

Implications If Not Addressed

Dependency on government will increase.

Breakdown of community.

Family violence, breakdown (secrets).

Cost escalation (hard in face of cutbacks).

Irresponsible society.

Benefits If Addressed

Relationships built - people helping people; Elders counsel.

More responsible connected society.

Preventive (an ear to the ground).

Expectations aligned closer to real affordability.

Faster integration of new immigrants.

Less violence.

Value in parenting.

Possible Strategies

Community participation in needs and program development.

Agencies train lay caregivers.

Clarify values.

Education (schools? other groups) and promotion.

Issue #3: Empowering individuals through education, information, resources, wellness/growth model to allow choices.

Implications If Not Addressed

Continued rehabilitation.

Waste of dollars.

Projection of blame (government, "others").

Need for care.

Intrusive treatment (more expensive methods and more problems created).

More interdependence .

Benefits If Addressed

Preventive rather than corrective.

Move away from institutionalization.

Less competitiveness.

Stronger families, communities.

More active citizen participation.

Possible Strategies

Teach about/explore choices.

Long term investment.

Education re: rights and responsibilities for everyone.

Dialogue on empowerment (interdependence).

Active dialogue with politicians at all levels.

Examine methods of child rearing and the consequences of each.

Preventive strategies.

Work with all ages.

Impressive campaigns re: supporting families (AADAC).

Improve societal attitude to change.

Citizen advocacy groups.

Awareness of larger social contacts for difficulties.

Examination of causes instead of band-aids.

D. Learning for Living: Strategies for Promoting Family Development

Study Group #3
Facilitators: Ron Brown and Colleen Jenson

Issue #1: Coordination and cooperation of services/government/ volunteers.

Implications If Not Addressed

Waste of resources.

Duplication of service.

Fragmentation of service.

Loss of standards/quality.

Confusion to clients.

Destructive competition
- to agencies
- to clients

Insecurity
- focus on survival

Benefits If Addressed

Cooperation strengthens.

Gaps more likely to be filled.

More resources directed to service delivery.

Planning not done in isolation. Government/ community can cooperate.

Agreement on priorities.

Community has substantial input and impact.

Volunteer resources used more efficiently, roles more clearly defined.

Increased range of choices.

Increased use of community resources.

Possible Strategies

Build on resources which already exist in communities.

Review the bureaucratization of private agencies.

Make Public Service bureaucracies become accountable to the community and service providers (a two-way street rather than present one-way).

Create a clearing house of resources.

Issue #2: Prevention.

Implications If Not Addressed

Increased financial costs to:
- individual
- family
- government
- community

Increased crises in family situations.

Increased problems with delinquency, drug abuse, child abuse, etc.

Increase of crisis and increase of time, energy and money spent on crisis intervention.

Continuing deterioration of family unit and individual strengths.

System ends up dealing with secondary problems vs. primary/original issues.

Cut-backs in crucial services in communities.

- crisis
- alienation
- inadequate abilities to cope with life
- lowered self-esteem
- less effective in using potential

Benefits If Addressed

Increased self esteem - satisfaction strength-stability.

Optimal development of children and other family members.

Learning to make choices and take responsibility for themselves.

Empowerment of individuals and families to help themselves.

Focuses on positive aspects and builds on strengths of families.

Working with issues at a more manageable level.

Less money spent on treatment.

Healthier individuals, families, and communities.

Possible Strategies

Provide opportunities for people to develop the skills needed to accept responsibility/planning for themselves
- education

Media e.g., Participaction.

Enrichment/supervision of children after school.

Long term planning vs. short term.

Greater coordination of and support for existing delivering agencies/supports.

Increase government commitment to prevention.

Increase and support social skills.

Issue #3: Education as a life long process/decrease stigma.

Implications If Not Addressed

Not available to all people.

All people won't fully participate.

Those already skilled learn more.

Drain on community resources of the individual/ family.

Change will become more difficult through transitions if we don't become educated as to process.

Benefits If Addressed

In the long run fewer resources will be needed.

Stress related illness decreased.

Creative energy released to enable people to add to society rather than being a drain.

More responsible individuals.

Less drain on community/ government resources.

Constructive coping/problem solving.

Possible Strategies

"Participaction" model of promotion.

Training and development of leaders/facilitators.

Facilitation model not knowledge based model.

Curriculum development.

Continue support of current delivery systems. Excellent existing ones i.e., FCSS, Rec. Departments, churches, cultural groups, AIFE, Further Education Councils, Colleges/Institutions/ University Further Education Departments.

Training courses on the job through business, government, non government organizations etc.

Issue #4: Research - exploratory and developmental.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Service providers are left unaware of other programs which can lead to either duplication of efforts or not implementing promising improvements already tested elsewhere.	Better utilization of resources. Enhance the effectiveness of existing programs. Developing new programs and/or integration of material into other generic educational programs (i.e., interpersonal communication skills are of value to individuals at home, school and work so such skills do not have to be taught 3 times to any one person). Research can establish baselines so that one can see progress being made.	Central clearing house and funding for such research. Share research instruments and findings. Long term follow up research. Research about the "hard to reach".

E. Financial Health and Families

Study Group #1
Facilitator: Richard Ouellet

Issue #1: Implications of taxation system.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Re: Tax $ Held		
• month to month income reduced • "binge" spending • encourage sale of income tax return • lowers ability to save (RRSP)	• month to month income increased • discourages "binge" spending • discourages sale of return • encourages filing return • provides savings ability on a budgeted basis	• use previous years income to determine deduction • increase access to exemptions • provide advance GST rebate • increase basic deduction to reflect poverty line
Child Care		
• encourages use of paid child care • increases latch-key kids • increased day care demands	• encourages stay-at-home spouse • provides consistent "in-home" care • reduces demand on day care • intrinsic value of raising your own children	• create a deduction for stay-at-home, as is the case for child care • provincially subsidize plan
Divorce Support		
• encourages higher income spouse to leave • increases co-parenting thus decreases stability • increases support needed for single parent families	• discourages abandonment • stable milieu for children • encourages counselling	• provide comparable deduction for "intact" families • eliminate "divorce deduction"
Canada Pension Plan		
• no access to stay-at-home parents • financial stress at retirement	• 55 to 65 income for widowed or divorced	• payments to CPP allowed on basic income (index)

Issue #2: Funding of Social Programs.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Continuation of band-aid approach.	Prevention costs less than "patching" in the long term.	More emphasis on funding (federal and provincial) for prevention diminishing the need for crisis care.
Increased economic polarization.	Healthier society.	
Increased dissatisfaction/ unrest.	Empowerment of people i.e., recognition of own worth and responsibility.	Part of prevention must be a basic income for those unable to earn own living.
More people in poverty.	Better quality of life for all.	Centralization or integration of support services so people don't fall between cracks.
		Extend health care benefits and school supply fees to working poor.
		Extend support of children until end of high school rather than age 18.
		Honour individual initiative and sense of worth.

Issue #3: Policies related to cause/prevention of inequalities.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Negative situation persists.	Allow maximum input (voice to voiceless) by all groups.	Public review of social allowance.
Increase in poverty.	Better data base.	Review social allowance procedures and caseloads.
Health, education lowered.	Gets rid of biases.	Rates for social allowance should be indexed to consumer price index.
Family breakdown.	Children would benefit.	More research and education as to who social allowance recipients are.
Increase in crime.	Empowerment of social allowance recipients.	More research and education as to who the working poor are.
Increased injustices.	Heightened priority for social allowance spending.	
Terrible human waste.	Increased public understanding.	
	Empowers the working poor too.	

E. Financial Health and Families

Study Group #2
Facilitator: Elinor Burwash

Issue #1: Declining financial health of families particularly single parent female heads.

Implications If Not Addressed

Declining health of children over a long period.

Leads to poverty continuing through adult life (poor children - poor adults - poor senior citizens).

Promotes cyclical/ intergenerational culture of poverty and hopelessness.

Adverse effects on education for lifetime i.e., early slow learners, behaviour problems in school, high school dropouts.

Focus on education is diverted in an attempt to solve multi-faceted problems that poor children bring to school with them.

Lack of participation of poor people in almost every facet of society.

Benefits If Addressed

Less long term financial needs placed on "Government" systems in the long run.

Promoting a more participatory class of people as obstacles to participation removed.

Poor feel more a part of their own solution.

Encourage the rise of a new generation without such a broad distinction of them (the wealthy) vs. us (the poor).

Better educated/skilled youth - becomes part of "adult world" and work force.

More realistic and more appropriately used health care system (preventive rather than always emergency needs).

More just/equal role of women in society.

Possible Strategies

Establish independent public review of social (financial) assistance service system (as was done by Ontario in 1986 - Thompson Commission).

To develop objectives and principles to guide the Government in re-structuring social service programs to meet the changing needs (diversity) of families.

Involving community based agencies with already established relationships with poor in working toward their own solutions, re-allocating existing resources (both financial and manpower) to identified needs of members of the community.

Need for Family Impact Statement for all Government policies and legislation.

Issue #1: Declining financial health of families particularly single parent female heads. (continued)

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Government will be forced to intervene more along the way i.e., apprehend children at risk if real financial support not put up front. Increased use of emergency (temporary) services (food banks, emergency hostels...). Social problems rise (rates of alcoholism, crime, violence, destructive behaviour). Greater long term public costs (health-emergency hospital use, Social Services, loss of educated youth). Greater alienation, anti-social behaviour - civil unrest as larger gap emerges Rich and Poor. Growth of permanent underclass in society. As more financial stress on single parent females, less time for quality child care.	Less families needing to put up with physical abuse/violence and therefore a break in the generational cycle of this abuse.	Build "healthy communities" by finding econimical ways for community development to begin in economically disadvantaged communities. Use strength within poverty stricken groups i.e., female support groups - to help themselves with solutions. Promote societal attitudinal change from private ("my children") - public ("our children") concern for the health of families and their communities. Provide opportunities i.e., through media - to broaden public awareness and support for building healthier communities. An independent review of the causes and dimensions of poverty in Alberta with recommendations for action to eliminate poverty.

Issue #1: Declining financial health of families particularly single parent female heads. (continued)

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Parent females forced to stay in abusive, violent relationships (w/children) due to relying on men for financial support.		
Increased breakdown of families due to many pulls/stresses in different directions.		
Increased mental illness and needs for those services.		
Increased incarceration.		
Increase poor population.		
Increasingly difficult to redistribute income due to increasingly high levels of education required in order to access the labour market and thus accumulate funds to meet higher level needs.		

F. Health and Families

Study Group #1
Facilitator: Ann McCluskey

Issue #1: Better communication between government departments (health, education, social services, environment).

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Duplication of services.	More could be accomplished with less cost.	Evaluation of present programs within all departments and reallocation of funds.
People falling through the cracks.	Less duplication.	
Increased cost.	Benefit to more vulnerable clients with multiple problems.	Elimination of inappropriate or duplicate programs.
Departments competing for funds to the detriment of the individual.	Decreased costs.	Communication through regular meetings of department heads, memos, etc.
	Reorganized and more appropriate programs and reallocation of staffing.	

Issue #2: Promote family involvement in student health education.

Implications If Not Addressed

Students may get conflicting messages and experience friction/inconsistency between home, school and community.

Children and parents may develop dichotomous perspective on health issues independent of discussion and interaction with one another.

Lose holistic perspective. Parents best know their whole child but are not involved in issues, hence, "health" receives a relatively impersonal, non-holistic, non-individualized treatment.

Family fragmentation.

Benefits If Addressed

Increased family communication, harmony and stability.

Strengthens ties between individual, student, family and institution.

Recognizes family/parents as resources.

Fitness/health continues past just school environment.

Holistic approach; shared family perspective.

Parents get supportive of programs.

Family values are reinforced by the institution so that the student receives consistent message.

Optimum health; healthier kids.

Possible Strategies

Involve parents in curriculum by having take-home material requiring parental sharing and involvement.

Make school philosophy recognize parents as active educators.

Have open agenda meetings with a facilitator, involving parents and educational community.

Acknowledge to the student, the role values play in health issues.

Issue #3: Accessibility for all to a wide range of community based health care services.

Implications If Not Addressed

Spiralling health care costs.

Continued narrow focus of health care services.

Continued inefficient deployment of professional expertise.

Continued power in the hands of doctors.

Benefits If Addressed

Empowerment of the individual in the management of their own health care re: choice and information.

Wider range of services available to a broader range of people.

Lowering of health care costs via use of a variety of services (less use of hospitals; fewer expensive medical services used; decreasing number of doctors).

Better use of existing expertise.

Sharing of existing responsibilities in delivery of health care i.e., doctors and nurse practitioners.

Possible Strategies

Availability through self referral.

Recognition of a range of alternate health related services and support for their use.

Decentralize/deinstitutionalize health care by moving it out of hospitals and into the community/neighbourhood.

Mobile treatment and prevention services to outlying areas.

Issue #4: Preventive approach/focus.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Continued increasing costs. Continued growth of health problems.	Savings of money and time as treatment programs and institutions are used less • less hospitalization, medication etc. Healthier people who are more productive • decreasing emotional and mental health problems resulting in less crime, less alcoholism and savings in costs of rehabilitation, prisons etc.	Take money saved on treatment, therapy and rehabilitation and put it into prevention. Raise public awareness of prevention to encourage "regular check ups" - mental, emotional and physical. Give rewards and incentives for being healthy and well e.g., trade sick leave for annual leave - rewards for limited use of health care. Have mandatory mental days for re-creation of energy and strength.

F. Health and Families

Study Group #2
Facilitator: Debi Piecoye

Issue #1: Support to family caregivers.

Implications If Not Addressed

Family breakdown/deterioration, stress, increased cost to care for members suffering because of breakdown, loss of identity, self esteem, poverty (through single parent families), increased divorce, delinquency, increased suicides, increased substance abuse.

Defective/impaired parenting.

Values of the relationship among family members lessened and weakened. Results in loss of support system.

Overload on government especially social services system.

Children will not be valued, cherished, important.

Benefits If Addressed

Improved family relationships.

Improved mental well being, physical well being, emotional stability, self esteem.

Parenting skills improved and encouraged.

Reduced stress on community resources.

Better adjusted children who become contributing, profitable citizens in the community and the world.

Social problems significantly reduced.

Greater ability to make choices for a healthier and happier lifestyle.

Greater productivity, decreased work absenteeism, reduced costs to business as time lost to illness decreases.

Possible Strategies

Greater recognition of parents.

Promotion and accessibility of premarital counselling services/programs.

Programs, incentives, policies, support systems in support of all aspects of family life.

Encouarge parents to express their views, concerns, ideas.

Encourage all caregiving agencies to seriously fulfil their mandate as it relates to the family.

Community-based education programs readily accessible to families.

Family concerns heard prior to any policy change affecting children.

Issue #1: Support to family caregivers. (continued)

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
		All family policy, programs, and legislation pertaining to family services must be reviewed to ensure they are effective, efficient and relevant to the various communities.
		To promote conditions i.e., parenting programs, which will strengthen families particularly Metis families.

Issue #2: Healthy public policy.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Children's Bill of Rights		
• uncertainty of well being • inequity in services	• clarity of rights • accountability • right for standard care province-wide • right for standard education province-wide	• review legislation
Services Bill of Rights		
• potential abuse • increased institutionalization • increased family stress	• increased wellness • better family relationship • decreased caring costs	• review legislation • respite care • home care • adult daycare
Food Labelling		
• confusion • potential health risk for those on diet restriction	• better nutritional awareness • better knowledge • better well being • decreased obesity and heart disease	• review legislation • standards
The Environment		
• increased contamination and pollution • increased illness and poor health • increased health care costs • destruction of the environment	• reduced costs • increased well being	• review legislation • family and individual participation in recycling program • create and implement guidelines

Issue #2: Healthy public policy. (continued)

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Healthy Workplace Lifestyles		
• decreased productivity • increased family stress	• increased productivity • better health • decreased absenteeism	• encourage healthy policies in the workplace • introduce incentives
Day Care Standards and Availability		
• irregular quality care • unavailability of quality day care	• consistency in quality of care • consistency in quality of staff	• review legislation • regulations for staff

Issue #3: Family violence.

Implications If Not Addressed

Increased cost to taxpayers.

Increased need from Social Services, Mental Health, hospitals etc.

"Cycle" is never ending.

More marriage breakdown.

More violence in society and at schools.

Increased use of the penal/judicial system.

Stress related illness.

Inability for children to learn.

Mental and physical health problems.

Neglect of children.

Need for more foster homes.

Increased alcohol and drug/substance abuse.

Increased suicide/homicide rates.

More people on welfare.

Benefits If Addressed

Save money on health care, mental health care, judicial system, social programs, etc.

Decreased substance abuse and abuse.

Reduction in violence in society, schools.

Lower suicide/homicide rates.

More stable relationships.

Possible Strategies

Educate public on judicial system, police, teachers, mental health, social services etc.

Teach clients to use health care system appropriately.

Support groups for children and battered victims.

More shelters for victims.

Health programs within shelters.

Issue #4: Health promotion/disease prevention.

Implications If Not Addressed

Occurrence of disease continues to escalate.

People will not have skills to make appropriate choices necessary to maintain and improve their health.

The long term benefits associated with coordinating the following with health promotion/disease prevention programs:
- environment
- education (illiteracy)
- social services
- financial support will not be realized. This would be more costly and less effective.

Programs will continue to be short term, expensive, band-aid treatments/ approaches.

Highly vocal, special interest groups will continue to dominate funding for health care system. Others may be left out.

Benefits If Addressed

These programs will lead to healthier individuals and healthier families.

This will reduce health care costs over a period of time.

Gives people the skills to take responsibility for their own health. These same skills will improve family functioning in a number of areas including financial, emotional, etc.

Children brought up in families where healthy behaviours are practised will have a headstart into carrying these skills into their adult life, and their own families.

For seniors, these programs will lengthen the time that they remain independent, "self-sufficient" in their own homes.

These programs will provide a coordinating function. Duplication of services will be reduced. Integrating "complementary services" will be possible among various groups, organizations.

Possible Strategies

Conduct basic market research, needs assessments with all Albertans involved to determine actual needs in the area.

Take a multi-disciplinary approach to health promotion.

G. Families and the Education System

Study Group #1
Facilitator: Jane Ranger

Issue #1: Education of a child is a shared responsibility.

Implications If Not Addressed

Stakeholders will continue to work in isolation.

Duplication and gaps in service.

Inconsistency of service.

Lack of knowledge of what is available or what can be accessed.

Diminished local autonomy.

Poorer quality of education.

Benefits If Addressed

Networking of resources and programs "don't reinvent the wheel".

Possibly decrease bureaucracy by putting local people in touch with local agencies.

Better adult education and improved parenting skills.

Student achievement improves directly with the amount of family participation in education.

Respect and understanding of education improves if business and community are partners with schools.

Alienation decreases e.g., work experience programs and guest speaker programs etc.

Possible Strategies

Create a registry of services that are effective.

Interlocking circles of influence rather than top-down mandating.

Need grass roots consultation and input into policy.

Issue #2: Quality and appropriateness of programs.

Implications If Not Addressed

Higher percentage of dropouts.

Literacy problems increase.

Social/identity problems.

Students not able to find and hold jobs or handle adult life.

Loss of good educators.

Integration of de-institutionalized special needs students needs special provisions.

Programs need to challenge as well as support.

Benefits If Addressed

Increased student comprehension/literacy.

Well rounded students.

Makes learning more exciting/satisfying for students.

More committed educator, challenged and supported.

Teacher satisfaction - feels successful - conveys enthusiasm.

Less truancy, disciplinary problems.

More student self-esteem, therefore less negative peer influence.

More responsible children.

Possible Strategies

Parent/student/teacher involvement in defining programs, resource commitment, accountability.

Teacher training and teacher support, sense of communal purpose among stakeholders in child's education.

Re-assess university programs - longer practicums.

Development and provision of diverse and rich range of resources, materials.

Program which introduces educational programs to parents.

Issue #3: Roles and responsibilities of school and families on moral issues.

Implications If Not Addressed

Cause breakdown of communication, trust between parents and school, children and parents.

Lead to unhealthy lifestyles.

No one takes responsibility for moral education, school thinks parents are doing it, parents expect schools to teach morals.

for evaluating resource material.

More divisions and private schools.

Parents will abdicate their roles.

No accountability or evaluating is done.

Values are taught regardless, it is better they are consciously chosen.

Benefits If Addressed

Better feeling between parents and school.

People will make decisions for themselves.

Parents won't be afraid to speak out.

More understanding and piece of mind.

Society will become more moral.

Teachers carry out the mandate of the parents.

Will result in basic moral values re-established.

Better quality choices.

Less social programs resulting in less government spending.

Students are not confused.

Possible Strategies

Access to teaching materials.

Give more flexibility to local school boards in deciding moral policies.

Forum between teachers and parents.

Use four criteria in evaluating moral issues
- safe
- legal
- healthy
- constitutional

Issue #4: Communication and understanding of each other's role.

Implications If Not Addressed

More children at risk.

Increased taxes.

If people are not communicating misunderstanding occurs and the child suffers.

Increased educational taxes.

Increased cost of services.

Unmet student needs.

Power broking at all levels (fragmentation).

Chaos, anger, disillusionment, apathy.

Loss of good resource people, and business partnerships.

Government departments are fragmented, not coordinated.

Students slip through the cracks.

Benefits If Addressed

Clear, logical clarification of true status of education funding.

If parents are involved, greater morale, student achievement, effective schools, higher initiative, student commitment.

Harmony and satisfaction.

Financial support - business involvement on a volunteer basis.

If government agencies cooperate cost of services is reduced, efficient delivery of service.

Accountability.

Possible Strategies

Tax credits for businesses who support partnership programs with either manpower or finances.

School boards should have communications departments.

Government departments must cooperate i.e., Family and Social Services and Education.

Greater acknowledgement of parental role in a child's education.

G. Families and the Education System

Study Group #2
Facilitator: Gerry Kilgannon

Issue #1: Develop "organic" partnerships consisting of the child, family, school and community groups, for the purpose of equal sharing of common goals and dreams to meet the needs of each individual child.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Economic		
Erosion of taxes because of a tax revolt.	Needs of all (child, family, school, community) being met.	Equip all partners (teachers, parents etc.) with skills strategies and good will to persevere through: • liaison • workshops • school board policies • media marketing • B.Ed. curriculum
Costly duplication of services.		
Economic stagnation because of drop-out work force.		
Social		
Early drop-out of students.		
Kids "hitting the skids".		
Isolation and detrimental peer influences.		
Emotional		
Conflicting expectations.		
Lower self esteem.		

Issue #2: Equitable access to quality education.

Implications If Not Addressed

- Multi standards of education.
- Polarization of school attendance.
- Abandonment of some schools.
- Discrimination.
- Increase in private schools and home schooling.
- Range of choice diminishes.
- Continue high drop-out rate.
- Perpetuation of social problems.
- Increased illiteracy.
- School staff stress.

Benefits If Addressed

- Increase in standard of living.
- Ensure higher standard of education.
- Enhanced student achievement.
- Broader public support base.
- Lower school staff stress.
- Increased range of student choices.
- Community school concept enhanced.
- Reduced social problems.
- Student satisfaction/improved attendance.

Possible Strategies

- More effective use of community school concept.
- Locally based program development vs. department based.
- Positive communication of school program.
- Breaking barriers.
- Sufficient funding - flexible funding support for equitable program development.
- Appropriate staffing e.g., multi-disciplinary teams, facilitator vs. lecturer, social/ academic experts.
- Avoid formula education i.e., distance education is not equal to equity.

Issue #3: Provide children with the kind of education that will enable them to meet the needs of today and tomorrow and to be responsible, ethical decision makers.

Implications If Not Addressed

Greater social problems.

Greater economic problems.

Greater division between lower and upper classes.

More societal costs due to need for society to support those who cannot cope.

Society more reactive than proactive.

Lack of character skills development.

Negative world, lacking environmental resources.

Benefits If Addressed

Fewer social problems.

Less poverty.

Individuals more responsible for themselves.

Shape the world we want to live in.

Increase in character skills related to ethics and values.

Positive, safer environment.

Possible Strategies

Generic concepts such as global awareness, environmental issues, health, etc. should be taught in all subject areas, at all levels.

Teachers need skills to become facilitators.

Children should be taught how to access analysing and evaluating information.

Have family workshops to help parents understand children's learning.

Have parent volunteers to work with school in area of self esteem.

Identify needs.

Voluntary agencies to be involved in clothing and feeding children.

Communication and cooperation of different agencies to meet the variety of needs of the child.

Increase the use of the community school concept.

Decision making input should be as close to the child as possible; establish policies to make parent and student input possible.

H. Families and Leisure

Study Group #1
Facilitator: Carolyn Dieleman

Issue #1: Education and lifestyle practices.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Difficult to define leisure • time • opportunity • feeling Overemphasize on structure. Need for diversity in leisure/education.	Families would be healthier. Families would be more well rounded. Families would be more functional. Families would enjoy a deeper sense of being. Families would enjoy greater self esteem. There would be an ease of transition between life stages for families. They would feel in more control of their lives.	Develop brochures, courses, and more conferences such as the Lieutenant-Governor's Conference. Don't focus only on school but use a school/community/ family approach. Take a longe range focus. Look for shifts in values and attitudes. Study participant/cohort groups from cost perspective of health, social and emotional stability. Add hard costs/numbers in whatever form, i.e., how many people use a facility, to optimize resources. Change attitudes then activities will change. Increase availability of education to everyone. Create awareness of variety of leisure opportunities.

Issue #2: Access/opportunities.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Increased violence.	Better health.	More parks.
Stagnation of society.	Growth and learning will occur in society.	Rural urban exchange.
Increased alcoholism.	Mental and physical fitness.	Further development of river valley i.e., trails (Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary etc.).
Divorce (family breakdown).	New experiences.	Swimming should be free.
Withdrawal from society.	Meet needs of more people.	More effective promotion of available opportunities.
Resentment toward government.	Preservation of natural resources.	Funding for operational costs.
Loss of votes i.e., due to concern over equitable access.	Meeting others.	Each MLA should hold local constituency meetings concerning leisure to get input from residents.
Loss of spirituality.	Satisfaction with government programs.	

Issue #3: Advocacy/lobbying.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Reduced quality of life.	Improved quality of life.	Government of Alberta proactively promote the development and provision of leisure for all Alberta.
Increased health care costs.	Reduced health care cost.	Adopt Hyndman commission recommendations.
Increased juvenile delinquency.	Corps of active volunteers.	Preventive initiatives are more cost effective than treatment expenditures.
Increased family breakdown.	Improved productivity of healthy people.	Development of marketing and education programs.
Increased social service costs.	Young people have opportunities for positive behavior.	Develop new strategies for rural Alberta to experience leisure activities outside of traditional facilities.
Loss of productivity.	Reduced stress for families and individuals.	Government ensure that ALL taxpayers who paid for facilities are able to use them: user pay means the economically disadvantages subsidize the higher socio-economic groups e.g., local authorities access other revenues, develop less expensive leisure opportunities within these facilities.
	Reduced social conflict.	
	Learn to appreciate people from other cultures and points of view.	

I. Families and the Law

Study Group #1
Facilitator: Miki Wood

Issue #1: Reconstruction of Family Law legislation.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Expenses will increase.	Positive statment of responsibilities.	Request law reform action at Attorney General level.
Unnecessary trauma.	Better dispute resolution.	Review existing proposals in Alberta and elsewhere • support • chilren • cohabitation
Non-resolution of issues.	Effective understanding and better education.	Statement of political resolve and action.
Higher divorce statistics.	Uniformity with other jurisdictions (federal and provincial).	
Lack of remedies.	Update old concepts and definitions.	

Issue #2: Public education and awareness.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Problems will continue into the future.	Social benefits.	Centralized information bank at local level - provincial government coordinated.
Injustice to those who are unaware.	Fewer problems.	Introduce in school system (credit courses) - life skills, marriage, child care, etc.
Prejudice against ill-informed.	Know where help and service is available.	Adult education programs.
Missed opportunities to access services and to affirm rights.	Preventive approach.	Workplace information, assistance, referrals, awareness of existing information.
	Cost effective.	

Issue #3: Definition of family.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
Inconsistency of treatment.	Greater certainty of responsibilities and rights.	Create a legal definition (or set of definitions) to define responsibilities and rights between "family members".
Inequities within programs.	Less gender inequality.	Permit, encourage contracts between people to establish their own rules if they don't want the "legal" ones to apply.
Uncertainty of where people "fit in".	Reduce breakdown by better understanding of obligations and expectations.	Publicize/educate - people must know what will happen if they don't take any steps and what steps they can take.
Inability to present coherent statement about family responsibilities and rights (depends on status, not function).	Greater individual responsibility and commitment.	Require marriage contract or acknowledgement that statutory contract will apply before issuing marriage license.
Does not reflect reality of social relationships.	Removes traditional roles - defined by the parties.	Account for implications of new reproductive technologies in the "default" definitions of "family members" rights and responsibilities.
Decreases respect for the justice of the law.	Greater protection for children.	
Expense of trying to get definite answers from courts and personal/emotional costs of trying to establish rights/ responsibilities.	Understanding of competing demands of dependants in different forms e.g., first, second marriage children, elderly parents, former spouses, ill or handicapped family members.	

I. Families and the Law

Study Group #2
Facilitator: Barbara Olsen

Issue #1: A new Family Law Act.

Implications If Not Addressed

Unknown, unpredictable laws re: family.

Fragmented, band-aid approach to problems of family.

Piecemeal approach to legislation.

Vested interest groups dicate policy.

Cost-prohibitive, limited access to courts for disadvantaged.

Mixture of old and new laws do not address problems of average modern families.

Kids lose.

Potential for more crime and mental illness.

Forum shopping.

Benefits If Addressed

Law clear and predictable. Rational results more likely. Consider mediation and expert witnesses.

Law will encourage settlement rather than litigation.

Specialized court leading to overall fairness.

Family law gains respect.

Leads to more effective and economical results.

Unified comprehensive approach to modern family.

Make family law more humane, social policy society can use as guide.

Less enforcement problems, income security, less need for government services.

End forum shopping.

Possible Strategies

Maintain political momentum.

Lobby individually and collectively.

Network like-minded groups/ individuals.

Conferences with MLA's involved in working groups.

Encourage competent research and request action on recommendations.

Resolution to come from this Conference.

Approach Canadian Bar Association and Law Society for support.

Approach individual MLA's and Ministers.

Publicize through the press.

Approach corporate sector for support.

Issue #2: Define family today.

Implications If Not Addressed	Benefits If Addressed	Possible Strategies
The present mythical definition of family is obsolete.	Realistic and practical new definition - will include all modern relationships.	Within the definition consideration must be given to the following individuals: • child (if any) • biological parent(s) • step parent(s) • adoptive parent(s) • grandparents (whether biological, step or adoptive) • adult in the house • significant adult(s) to the child
Disenfranchises 87% of today's population.	The definition will make the law, programs and services more appropriate to today's society.	

Appendix C

Conference Evaluation Report

Appendix C - Conference Evaluation Report

251 evaluation forms were received from the 451 registered delegates. Attendance numbered over 500 with inclusion of special guests.

Questionnaire Results

A. General

	Poor	Satisfactory		Excellent	
1. What is your overall impression of the conference?	1	2	3	4	5

226 people answered section A.

3 people circled no. 1
24 people circled no. 2
73 people circled no. 3
96 people circled no. 4
30 people circled no. 5

B. Study Papers

	Poor	Satisfactory		Excellent	
1. How effective were the study papers in your preparation for the conference?	1	2	3	4	5

202 people answered section B.

7 people circled no. 1
27 people circled no. 2
95 people circled no. 3
58 people circled no. 4
15 people circled no. 5

C. Plenary Sessions

	Poor	Satisfactory		Excellent	
1. How well did the keynote speakers contribute to your understanding of family issues?	1	2	3	4	5

217 people answered section C.

6 people circled no. 1
10 people circled no. 2
57 people circled no. 3
95 people circled no. 4
49 people circled no. 5

D. Workshops

1. How useful to you was the information presented in the Workshops?

Poor Satisfactory Excellent
1 2 3 4 5

221 people answered section D. (first workshop)
212 people answered section D. (second workshop)
However, many did not indicate the workshop titles

first workshop	second workshop
(5 people indicated a 0)	(9 people indicated a 0)
36 people circled no. 1	35 people circled no. 1
66 people circled no. 2	62 people circled no. 2
45 people circled no. 3	44 people circled no. 3
54 people circled no. 4	33 people circled no. 4
15 people circled no. 5	29 people circled no. 5

E. Study Group Discussion

1. Rate the effectiveness of your study group.

Poor Satisfactory Excellent
1 2 3 4 5

221 people answered section E.

(4 people indicated a 0)
11 people circled no. 1
14 people circled no. 2
61 people circled no. 3
87 people circled no. 4
44 people circled no. 5

Conference Evaluations: Report

Introduction

About half of the conference participants submitted evaluations. There is a sufficiently wide range of opinion on most topics to verify an accurate representation of the diversity of conference participants. What is included here is a sample of typical comments from evaluations.

Themes

There are several recurrent themes echoed in the evaluations. In general terms, these could be described as:

- an appreciation of the excellent organization of the conference.
- some expressed concern for the "showiness" of some of the events.
- the wish for more time to consider these serious and wide ranging issues, and to consult with others about them.
- real concern for the seriousness of intent of the Premier's Council to utilize the work done at this conference and follow up on these public recommendations.
- an overwhelming expression of hope and commitment to families by individuals wanting to do more, personally and professionally, as family members, community volunteers and advocates.

A.1.Overall Impressions

These comments capture a sample of general participant response to the conference.

Comments

- Came to conference feeling angry and somewhat negative - am leaving conference with a great deal of hope for the future for families and communities. Lets all work together as a whole family and make it all come about better.
- I feel optimistic that much will come from the study groups - to implement policy.
- Lt.-Governor's Banquet and Reception a real treat.
- This was an excellent start. We should attempt to hold similar workshops within local centres - to get local input.
- I found the keynote speakers to be the most beneficial part of the conference, in increasing my understanding of family issues.

- Please continue the process begun in the study groups.
- I have been enriched and will take 8 tapes back to promote in my community.
- Thank you for a stimulating and exciting time!!
- The Family Fair was a super idea.
- I am pleased by the selection of Stockwell Day to chair the committee.
- Felt like the organizer spent a lot of time anticipating our needs for a good conference.
- Appreciated the shuttle bus.
- You did a great job!
- Entertainment excellent.
- Less time in gala events.
- There were some excellent, stimulating speakers!
- Needed more input from the Native population, and more on dysfunctional families.
- Greater participation of parent groups would have been appreciated.
- I felt that families not-in-crisis were shunted aside in favour of a focus on crisis families.
- Very, very well prepared and organized. Incidently, my children appreciated greatly the Sunday "Family Fair" and meeting Premier Getty.
- Well organized, a good selection of presenters.
- I think it was well planned and that the speakers were all quite interesting. I liked the video, the Oratorio, and most components of the conference. I'm not really sure what was missing but there was not that spark that I sometimes feel at a conference. I guess the political back-patting that kept being repeated left me with a bad taste - an emphasis on the family is not new. Mr. Getty didn't discover the family.
- Meeting together with other delegates that have common interests and also many different personal experiences was very beneficial.
- You can always learn something from these conferences. Families are important and I commend you for making a commitment to this worth while program.
- I was very pleased it was not just professionals and government agencies etc., but available to the ordinary citizen for their input.

- I acquired a better understanding and acceptance of different methods and needs in parenting, child care, etc.
- The conference stimulated a lot of thought, examination and reflection. This is good.
- I had 2 children in the daycare and was very pleased with the quality of care provided.
- Needed one more day of workshops.
- Lack of "ordinary" people.
- There should have been a greater emphasis on the spiritual aspect contributing to healthy, happy homes.
- I personally appreciate our Provincial Government and all who were involved in planning and preparing this event. A good beginning indeed. God bless you all.
- Many thanks to government for giving such importance to the family. The meals and entertainment were great. Well organized.
- Thank you very much!
- I hope something practical is done with recommendations coming out of the conference.
- The Overview of the Workshops time could have been more productively used either in workshops or discussion groups.
- Too representative of religious groups of Alberta, and too many people with a narrow agenda.
- The banquet was lovely.
- It was frustrating having both an informative and a communicative conference all in one. It seemed there wasn't enough time for either.
- That Native people were not very much included.
- Too lavish. Entertainment although enjoyable was not necessary.
- Good idea - but seemed too broad. Perhaps 3-5 major issues could have been addressed this year -more next year.
- The conference addressed very few real issues.
- For me during the Tuesday & Wednesday, I felt everything was well done.
- It strengthened my own convictions.
- The people contacts I made may help me obtain funds for enhanced services to refugees.

- Not enough time to mingle with large numbers of excellent human resources.

A.2. Recommendations

Although not addressed by all respondents, this section reflects the many different suggestions that were made. There seemed to be an assumption by many participants that this conference was the first of many.

Comments

- Make certain the youth (15-25) are represented.
- Next time, more involvement of groups not in the mainstream - native, immigrant; more family people with no agency association; one more day!; more study work on single parenting.
- Needed more time to "socialize" and get to know people.
- There should be a similar series of conferences on social issues in Alberta.
- Could the study groups be held over 2 days?
- Another time; no overview - less entertainment - at least 3 workshops.
- More balance representation from families of all economic/educational/ethnic background.
- Invite more women's groups.
- Could put small discussion groups on first day and have instructive sessions the following day. This might allow time for more input.
- Provide time to attend at least one more workshop.
- Invite people who are willing to accept concepts that apply to a broad cross-section of Albertan's, rather than ones who hawk narrow, vested interests.
- Keynote presentations were excellent. Perhaps they could be shown on T.V. or made available through ACCESS.
- I would like to see some of the management level staff in the organization in which I work included in a conference like this. They are the ones who have the power to make some of the changes recommended.
- Provide a list of agencies (and their addresses) attending to help further networking.
- Should have had a question period after the Minister's (Oldring's) speech.

- A conference specifically addressing the various forms of the families e.g. nuclear, blended etc. would be a great idea - have it in Calgary next time.

- Do this again please! But perhaps more representatives from business - human resources of large corporations.

- Would be good to do this in Calgary and Edmonton, to allow more participation.

- Do not have it in conjunction with Family Day Fair. It's too tiring.

- It could be longer if it retains a broad focus, but may be more appropriate to try issue-focused conferences to cover off the diverse range areas which impact families and to ensure that work continues to be done in all areas.

- Fewer workshops offered with the chance to go to 3. Perhaps 3 days but not so rushed - i.e. 9-3 p.m. I was too tired to enjoy my family after it!!

- Need more input time from delegates.

- More emphasis on and involvement needed by disadvantaged families.

- Involve more ethnic people. After all, we have different cultures and traditions in families and different standards of living.

B. Workshop Usefulness

Comments

- I feel that I chose workshops on topics that I was already quite familiar with. I did not learn a great deal of new information in these sessions.

- Nice to see such a wide diversity of talented people from around the country assembled to speak with us.

- In relation to the workshop on Child Care, the speaker should understand that child care is not just daycare.

- Should have included a discussion component in each workshop.

- Needed more time for workshops; more chances to attend different workshops.

- The Indian and Metis felt that they should have special portions in the program. I disagreed. They are a part of our province.
- Farm families are a very important factor in Alberta families. They must be acknowledged as such!

- Too bad we couldn't take them all, or at least more of them.
- Both extremely interesting. I would have liked to have been able to attend 2 more.
- Both workshops were excellent. I would have liked to have attended more.
- Needed a workshop on single-parent families.
- Mr. Low, in a Workshop "Our Children, Our Future", sure boosted my self esteem. It was great.

C. Study Group Discussion Effectiveness

Although several participants admitted that they initially reacted to the imposed discussion process, most went on to say that they had their most beneficial experience at this point in the conference (day 2). Many even expressed admiration for the civility and openness of fellow participants, despite widely divergent points of view. Almost all expressed the hope that the results of these discussions would be utilized, and the exercise prove not to be a futile one.

Comments

- All participants seemed painfully sincere and optimistic about being heard.
- The interaction between professional/non-professional, urban/rural was super.
- This was the most important part of the conference and could have used most of the two days. The structure and format were excellent and should be used again.
- Good cross section of opinion - from parents, teachers, trustees, economist's, and professors.
- Wonderful!! A highlight of the two days!!
- It becomes interesting, when views are very divergent.
- I thought the enthusiasm level was excellent. Very positive discussions.
- It is sometimes good to talk to people with whom you agree to disagree.
- Thanks for the opportunity to share in the impact of planning for the future of families. Families are so very important.
- It was a real broadening experience.
- Great!
- Not only did I get to voice my opinions, I learned ... and felt our proposals were valid and useful.

- I liked the format - presented one issue focus and limited potential for grandstanding. Facilitator was super.
- This was the "meat" of the conference! We should have done this on the first day and given more time for more input.
- Good leadership and good results, though I would have liked a bit more time.
- I appreciated the way our study group participants listened to each other's points of view and worked hard to represent a variety of wide ranging concerns and solutions for them.
- The diversity of views on some subjects was overwhelming.
- Some people forgot the group process and wanted to push around individual ideas.
- Productive and satisfying.
- Process was well planned and outlined.
- I was sceptical after the first day, but I found the group so committed about having an impact that they were wonderful to work with, and worked very hard during the short time allowed.
- Very worthwhile.
- Time limit was insufficient to deal with these important issues.
- Very good exercise! Not in futility, I hope!
- Will our material be used?
- Because of the divergence of personal views and special interests it became impossible within the time frame to discuss all of them.
- Concept is excellent. Based on total length of conference, a good percentage was given to this portion. It was too rushed, too short, but a good beginning.
- Each participant was listened to in the study group and we were able to come up with some excellent strategies. Our facilitator was excellent.
- Excellent way to gather information and opinions. Hopefully it will be listened to.
- I suppose the real effectiveness will not be known until we see the action, or inaction, that follows.
- It was amazing to see consensus among all group members, however diverse. The Premier's Council must pay attention!
- Everyone was task orientated, and we all respected each others views and opinions.

- We covered a lot of work in our study group and were very satisfied with the information we all produced.
- Family violence is a very important issue to me. I voiced my opinion and was respected. Our problems in my community were discussed in great detail.
- Inadequate time to conquer a monumental task.
- Groups too diverse, so not enough time to develop and debate ideas.
- Great idea - lots of brainstorming well facilitated, helpful in defining issues strategies. Great opportunity for networking, learning.
- Found the time was much too limited to do something worthwhile.
- Very interesting process. Good for us to see how our needs easily melted into common goals.

D. Intended Follow-up Action

Because of the heartening breadth of personal commitments made by conference participants at the conclusion of the event, this section reflects the whole range of individual intentions indicated in the evaluations.

Comments

- I plan to examine the report thoroughly and work for change to reduce or eliminate the trend of the market towards part-time work.
- As a government employee, more of the same likely, but with a greater awareness.
- Write a report.
- I would hope that the Premier can come to understand that we all value families in all their diversity: all "good" families are not "2 parent - 2 kids - middle class families".
- Involvement in public hearings if they occur.
    - i)Report to Local FCSS, Agriculture Discussion Group.
    - ii)Use the new concepts in brain storming in my community to plan strategies to meet needs.

- Feedback to my organization, which needs to advocate for leisure and leisure balance.
    - i)Monitor the policy developments of the Premier's council.
    - ii)The membership on the Premier's council should have been decided upon by public. It should be non-partisan and co-chaired by all 3 parties.

- Encourage point of view paper from my group.

- Use information to form mission statement for FCSS board.

- I plan to continue on the course of voluntarism that my family and I have been on for over 25 years. Our hope is that we have made a difference.

- Strongly suggest family law reform.

- Make self more available for training lay persons.

- Will write to Premier's Council; will contact some MLA's.

- Contact colleagues I've met at conference for continuation of discourse.

- Very interested in the resulting report and future initiatives.

- I hope we may pull the groups in our community together to discuss the benefits of family support in every aspect.

- Will my time have been worthwhile or will nothing happen? Will the Council be powerless as only an advisory council?.

- Hopefully, learned some ideas to facilitate in a rural community.

- I have become more aware of "family", it's complications, it's importance, and how women have a great effect on our future because of their changing roles.

- Encourage Native Communities to set up family policies.

- It is my understanding that public forums will take place on those issues and I will participate and bring others.

- Keynote speakers were excellent. I intend to follow up on using some of them at future conferences.

- Keep recommendations on the political agenda.

- To share the enthusiasm and commitment on this conference and what I feel is the great value of it with others and to encourage others to take part another year.

- Let people know in our small community about the support systems that are available.

- Read the other background papers.
- Introduce new ideas to group personnel development programs.
- Pass on information about conference issues to my students.
- Continue to press for government legislation for child care standards in both family day homes and group child care, with minimum training standards for care givers.
- Encourage the province to at least catch up with other provinces, on child care.
- Lobby government for equitable benefits to all parents regardless of choice in child care, and a system in which those benefits are tied to need.
- Tell other families about the issues raised at the conference. Make sure the follow-up report does not end up on a shelf and that the government really does take some action towards the family.
- Send completed report to participants and ask for written follow-up from participants.
- Read works of some of the very intelligent, perceptive people I heard speak.
- Plan to circulate tapes to friends and associates.
- Order tapes for school library.
- Speak to my community and promote further integration of families, communities and government.
- Attempt to get input from ordinary people as to their needs, concerns and visions.
- I will be making a summary available to the Boards I chair and the clients served, which number collectively 53,000 Albertans.
- Examine my personal family situation and implement change; encourage my husbands business to become a more aware, flexible employer - congratulate my employer on her innovation, flexibility and general sense of being ahead of her time!
- I will be more intentional in concern for employee's family concerns.
- Got some thoughts that today seem radical, but are workable.
- Intend to become more involved and vocal in educational issues.
- Report to National Council of Welfare as Alberta representative.
- Work will go on - will struggle day to day to get across the need of services and needy groups whose needs have been hardly looked at to date.

- Advocacy: will watch closely for progress from this conference and keep in touch with MLA.
- Promote agriculture farm people as reputable business people with family needs very different to urban and rural. I was disappointed at the choice of an MLA as chairman of the Premier's Council.
- Letter writing.
- At my work I am doing research on the social health of Albertans. I hope to include many of the dimensions discussed within the study.
- Do some follow-up reading.
- Continue volunteer work in community perhaps not taking on a 2nd paying job, but spending more time with my family.
- I am anxious to see if any recommendations/suggestions are implemented.
- Focus on research in professional work i.e. more family history in teaching etc.
- Pass on the knowledge gained to members of my organization.
- I would like to be further involved in health care planning which needs to be much broader than is now.
- We (general public - caregiver) need to give more information to MLA's, funders, etc.
- Look forward to the conference report and sharing it with others.
- Hopefully, there will be another conference to update the concepts of positive family living.
- Network with others in the prevention and treatment of family violence.
- Spend more time with my family.
- Increase the FCSS focus on children - to make children a priority for funding research etc.
- Increased networking. Further contact with some participants.
- Report back to agency - adopt a family system context in future discussions.
- Feedback to my own school board.
- Attend public forums and make presentation if such are held.
- Share findings with nursing and community groups to which I belong.
- Report to employer.

- I obtained some interesting notions from both workshops that I will think more about in my position as an FCSS board member.
- Write the Minister saying: Please consult the groups excluded; e.g. Front line workers with families - gays/lesbians - immigrants - childless couples - women's groups - teen parents.
- I will continue to lobby the government for policy changes pertaining to the poor.
- Work to eliminate poverty through increasing public awareness of the need to invest in human resources.
- Talk with others in my field/workplace.
- Evaluation (personally) of my own values. Looking for and dispelling the myth under which I operate.
- Community forum on these issues.
- Talk to MLA and MP.
- Make members aware of available resources.
- Further personal research into potential areas of involvement.
- Advocate to government members.
- If no action soon, then a new provincial government!

Appendix D

Resources Available

Appendix D - Resources Available

Audio Tapes of Conference Proceedings

1. Opening Ceremonies and Keynote Address - **Ruben Nelson**
2. Overview of Workshops

Workshops

3. A.1 - Every Family is a Working Family - **Alan Mirabelli**
4. A.2 - The Workplace and its Impact on Families - **Marjorie Blackhurst**
5. A.3 - Childcare Revisited - **Kathy Gallagher Ross**
6. B.1 - Role of the Community in Family Life - **Susan Berlin**
7. B.2 - Families and Community Planning - **Walter Jamieson**
8. B.3 - Today's Families - **Susan A. McDaniel**
9. B.4 - The Impact of Cultural Values - **Hamda Umar / Donna Rose / Paul LeGrange/Joe P. Cardinal**
10. C.1 - Families, Government and You - **Robert Couchman / Geoff Norquay**
11. C.2 - Families as Care-Givers - **Dianne Kieren**
12. C.3 - Supporting Vulnerable Families - **Dawn Walker**
13. C.4 - Ethics, Values and Family Traditions - **Chad Gaffield**
14. C.5 - Our Children, Our Future - **Ken Low**
15. D.1 - Promoting Family Development - **Bill Griffiths**
16. E.1 - Poverty and its Impact on Families - **Ruth Berry**
17. E.2 - Individual Responsibility for Financial Planning - **Elaine Barnes**
18. F.1 - Promoting Healthy Lifestyles - **Priscilla Koop**
19. G.1 - Complementary Roles: Schools, Families and Communities - **Sue Ditchburn**
20. H.1 - Leisure, Balance, Joy and Familes - **Bob Woodburn**
21. I.1 - Family Obligations: The Law - **David Cruickshank / Gerald Robertson / Christine Davies**
22. I.2 - Family Reorganization: The Law - **Diane Pask / Bruce Ziff / Nancy Flatters**

Plenary Sessions

23. Keynote Address - **James Garbarino**
24. Panel Response - **M. Hodgson / J. Graham / L. Foley / A. Lawson**
25. Luncheon Guest Speaker - **Joyce Irvine**
26. Closing Session - **Honourable John Oldring**

Study Papers

Families Today: Change, Diversity and Challenge - Dr. Susan A. McDaniel

A. Balancing Work and Family Life - Mary Woodbury
B. Families and the Community - Dr. Lyle Larson
C. Supporting and Strengthening Families - Michael W. Goldstein
D. Learning for Living: Strategies for Promoting Family Development - Dr. F. June Morgan
E. Alberta Families: Financial Health Status Report - HSP Humanite Services Planning Ltd.
F. Health and Families - Dr. Joel Christie
G. Families and the Education System - Mary Woodbury
H. Families and Leisure - Dr. Jarmila Horna
I. Families and the Law - Peter Lown, M.L. (Marnie) McCall, Dr. Joseph P. Hornick

Audio/Visual Resources

Conference Video - focusses on issues faced by families and highlights importance of resources and support for their resolution.

ACCESS Documentary - highlights Family Fair and Conference proceedings.

Audio Tape of Family Song

All of these resources are available through the Family and Social Services Library, 6th Floor, Seventh Street Plaza, 10030 - 107 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 3E4. Please call 427-7272 to arrange to borrow the resources or to view them in the Library.